

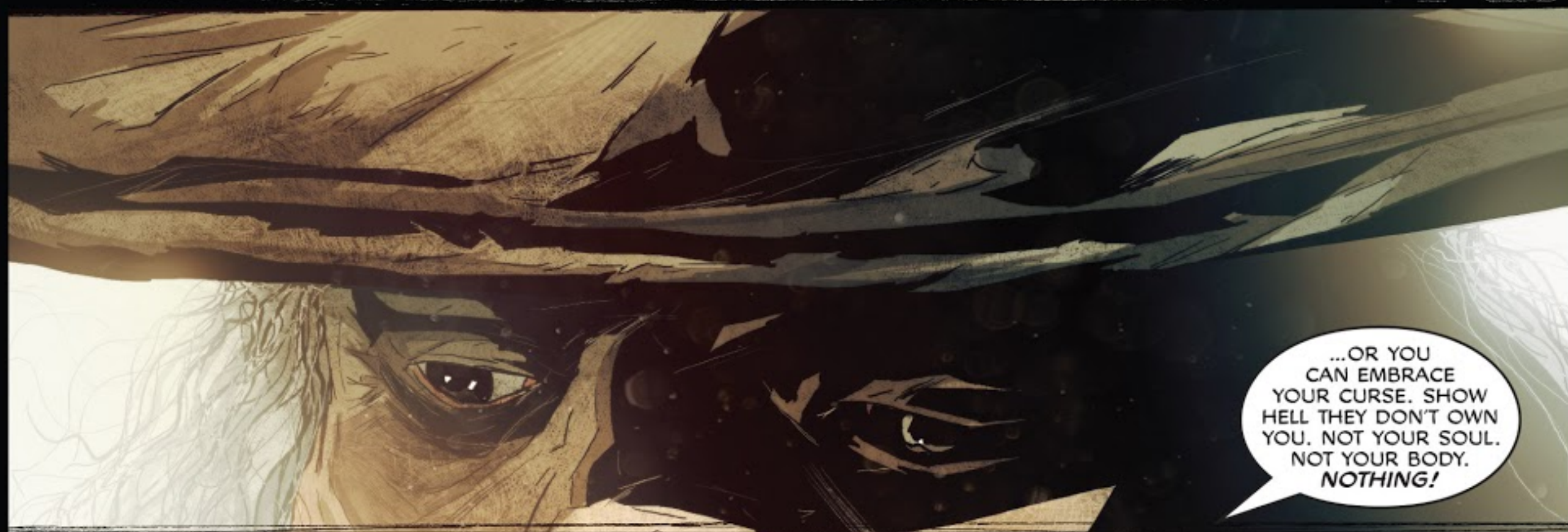
SPAWN[®]



SEYMOUR
KUDRANSKY
M'FARLANE



AND SO
THE CHOICE IS
YOURS. YOU
CAN WALLOW IN
SELF PITY...



...OR YOU
CAN EMBRACE
YOUR CURSE. SHOW
HELL THEY DON'T OWN
YOU. NOT YOUR SOUL.
NOT YOUR BODY.
NOTHING!



UH?



GOD...

LOOK AT YOU.
HOW
MAGNIFICENT.

I REJECT
**ALL OF
IT!**

HEAVEN!
HELL! AND ANY-
ONE CONNECTED TO
WHAT I'M GOING
THROUGH!

AND I'LL
USE EVERY
OUNCE OF
POWER IN ME TO
DESTROY YOU
ALL!



NOW IT ALL
MAKES SENSE.
I SHOULD HAVE
FIGURED THIS
OUT MYSELF.



THEY'RE NOT
AFRAID OF YOU
OR THE PORTION
THAT COMES
FROM HELL.



THEY'RE
AFRAID OF THE
PIECE THAT'S BEEN
TOUCHED BY GOD!
THAT'S THE PART THEY
CAN'T CONTROL. THAT'S
WHAT'S DANGEROUS TO
THEM. FOR CENTURIES THEY'VE
BEEN ABLE TO CONTAIN
WHATEVER DEVIATIONS US
SPAWNS MIGHT THROW
AT THEM-- BUT WHAT
THEY'VE NEVER HAD THE
POWER TO DO IS
DOMINATE HEAVEN'S
PRESENCE.

BUT NOW...
THEY MUST THINK
YOU'RE THE KEY TO
GOD'S DOWNFALL.
CONTROL YOU AND THEY
HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO
HEAVEN. NO OTHER SPAWN
HAS BEEN ABLE TO OFFER
THAT CONNECTION. BUT IT'S
A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD.
IF HELL CAN BREACH
HEAVEN USING YOU--
THEN GOD CAN
BREACH HELL THE
SAME WAY.

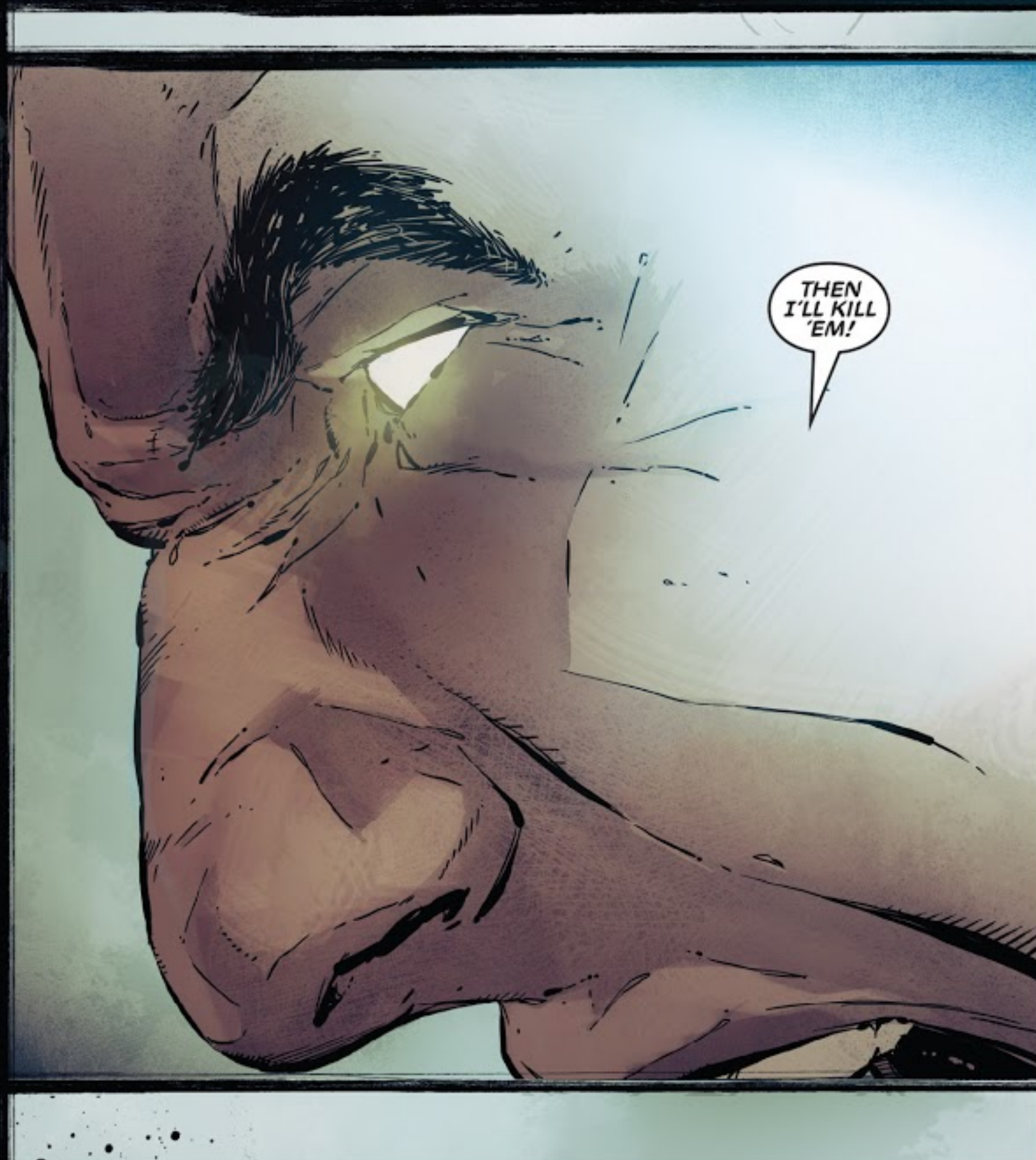
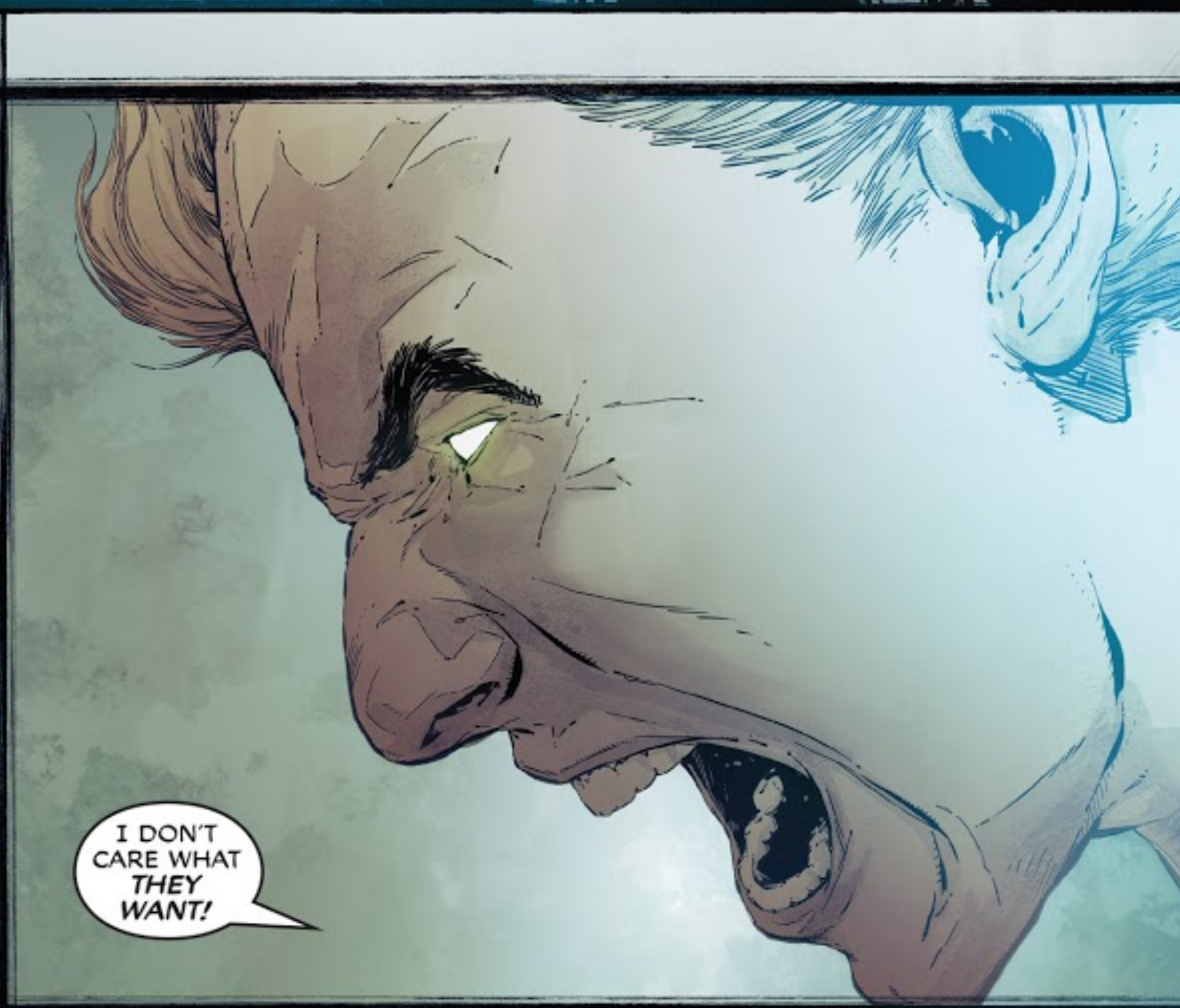
AND WHO-
EVER INVADES
FIRST WINS!

YOU'RE THE
CONDUIT THEY
BOTH NEED!



THEY'LL
HUNT YOU
FOREVER UNTIL
ONE OF THEM
SUCCEEDS.

I...





EVERY
ONE OF THEM!
STARTING WITH
YOU!

YOU DON'T
EVEN KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE FIGHTING!
THEY'RE CONFUSED
ABOUT YOU. THAT'S
YOUR ADVANTAGE!
USE IT AGAINST
THEM!

THEN
WHAT?



WHAT
ABOUT
YOU...?!



YOU'RE
AFRAID TOO!
WHY?

IF ALL
YOU WANT
IS TO HELP ME,
THEN WHY ARE
YOU SCARED?
WHOSE SIDE
ARE YOU
ON?



MINE!
I'M ON MY
SIDE!

BUT TO GET
WHAT I WANT
YOU NEED TO STAY
ALIVE! YOU'RE NO
GOOD TO ME
DEAD!



SO
STOP!
LOOK AT
YOURSELF!



THE COSTUME--
IT'S FEEDING OFF YOU!
DON'T YOU GET IT? YOUR
COSTUME KNOWS ABOUT YOUR
POWERS. KNOWS YOU'RE SPECIAL!
THAT'S WHY IT WANTS TO CONTROL
YOU. WHY IT ATTACKS YOU AT NIGHT!
NOTHING MATTERS TO YOUR SYMBIOTE
OTHER THAN SMOTHERING YOU. AND
EVERY TIME IT APPEARS WITHOUT
YOUR PERMISSION IT'S CLOSER
TO THAT GOAL! BUT IT'S
AFRAID OF YOU TOO.

THAT'S WHY
SIMMONS MUST
HAVE PICKED YOU.
HE WANTED THEM
CLOSE TO YOU!
ALL OF THEM.





WHY?

BECAUSE, LIKE A GRENADE-- IF YOU DETONATE-- YOU KILL **US ALL** AT ONCE!

MAYBE THAT'S **WHY** AL SACRIFICED HIMSELF!* BECAUSE IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO CREATE THE WEAPON HE NEEDED TO DESTROY US!

* Issue 185--TODD



YOU-- JIM! YOU'RE THAT WEAPON!



DON'T LET THEM CONTROL YOU!



TOO LATE. I'VE SENT HIM AWAY. DOWNING CAN'T HEAR YOU ANY-MORE.



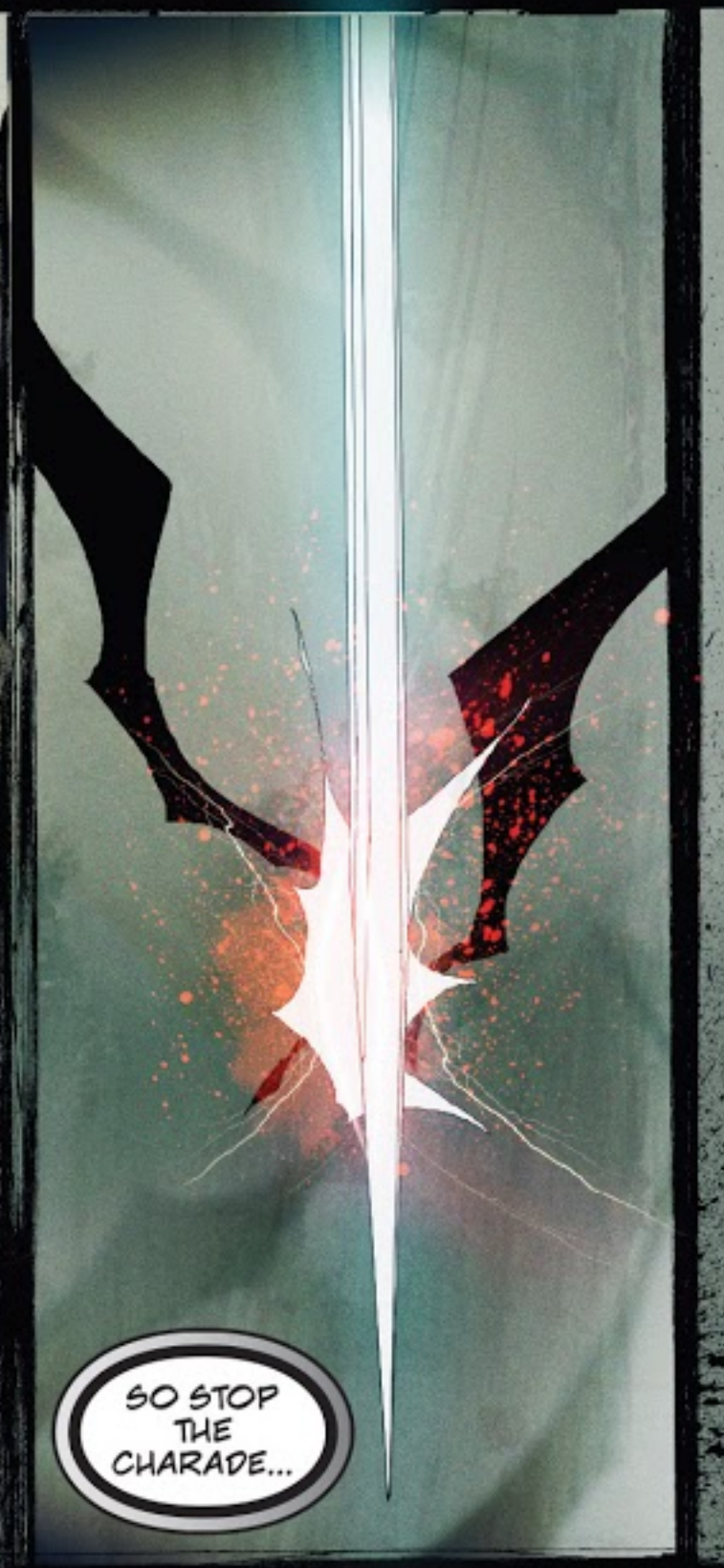
THEN
LET'S END
THIS! AFTER ALL
THESE CENTURIES!
IT'S TIME
WE FINALLY
PUT A STOP
TO IT!



YOU
CAN'T. YOU'D
HAVE TO KILL
DOWNING TO
BEAT ME.



AND I
KNOW YOU'RE
NOT WILLING
TO DO THAT...
NOT YET AT
LEAST!



SO STOP
THE
CHARADE...

A comic book panel showing Venom in the center, looking down at two other characters. The character on the left is a werewolf-like creature with fur and pointed ears. The character on the right is a man with a shaved head and a dark, tactical suit. The background is dark and rocky with some roots or vines hanging down. A bright light source is visible behind Venom, creating a silhouette effect.

...BECAUSE
YOU'RE
**JUST LIKE
US!**

WHEN THE
TIME COMES,
WHEN DOWNING
DOESN'T SERVE YOUR
PURPOSES ANY LONGER--
YOU'LL SLAUGHTER HIM
TOO! STOP PRETENDING
YOU DON'T WANT
HIM AS MUCH AS
WE DO.

AND IN
CASE YOU'RE
THINKING OTHERS
CAN HELP YOU. I'VE
POISONED THEM
ALREADY...

"MARC."

"SUSAN."

"TWITCH."

"SARA.

"THEY ALL HAVE
THE DISEASE. I'M
COURSING
THROUGH EVERY
ONE OF THEM.



ALONG WITH
ALL THOSE PEOPLE HE
HEALED. SO WHEN I TELL
HIM-- WHEN I WANT HIM TO
GIVE UP-- DOWNING WILL
TRADE EVERYTHING TO
SAVE THOSE HE CARES
ABOUT. INCLUDING
HIS SOUL.

HE'LL
NEVER
GIVE THAT
UP!

ESPECIALLY
NOT
TO YOU!





IT'S A
PITY HOW
MUCH YOU'VE
FORGOTTEN,
COG.



REMEMBER
YOUR COSTUME?
WHEN YOU WERE
A SPAWN?

REMEMBER
THE PAIN IT COULD
DELIVER? HOW YOU
PRAYED FOR NOTHING
OTHER THAN TO BE RID
OF IT. THAT'S WHAT WE
DO. WE WEAR YOU
OUT... SLOWLY.
OVER TIME.



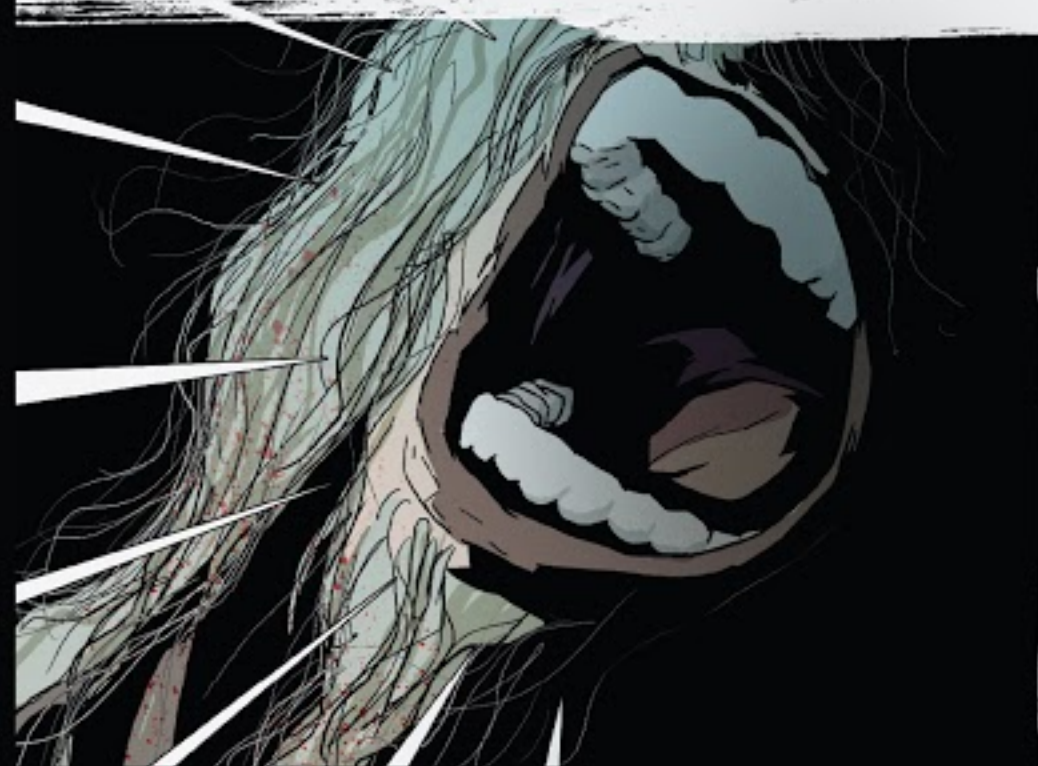
LIKE A
CANCER
PATIENT NEAR
THEIR END,
DOWNING'S PAIN
WILL BECOME SO
UNBEARABLE, ALL
HE'LL WANT TO
DO IS DIE. AND
THAT'S WHEN
I GET HIS
SOUL!

TELL
YOURSELF
THOSE LIES.
BUT HE'S DIFFERENT
AND YOU KNOW IT!
YOUR PARLOR TRICKS
MAY HAVE WORKED
ON THE REST OF
US... BUT NOT HIM!
**NOT THIS
SPAWN!**

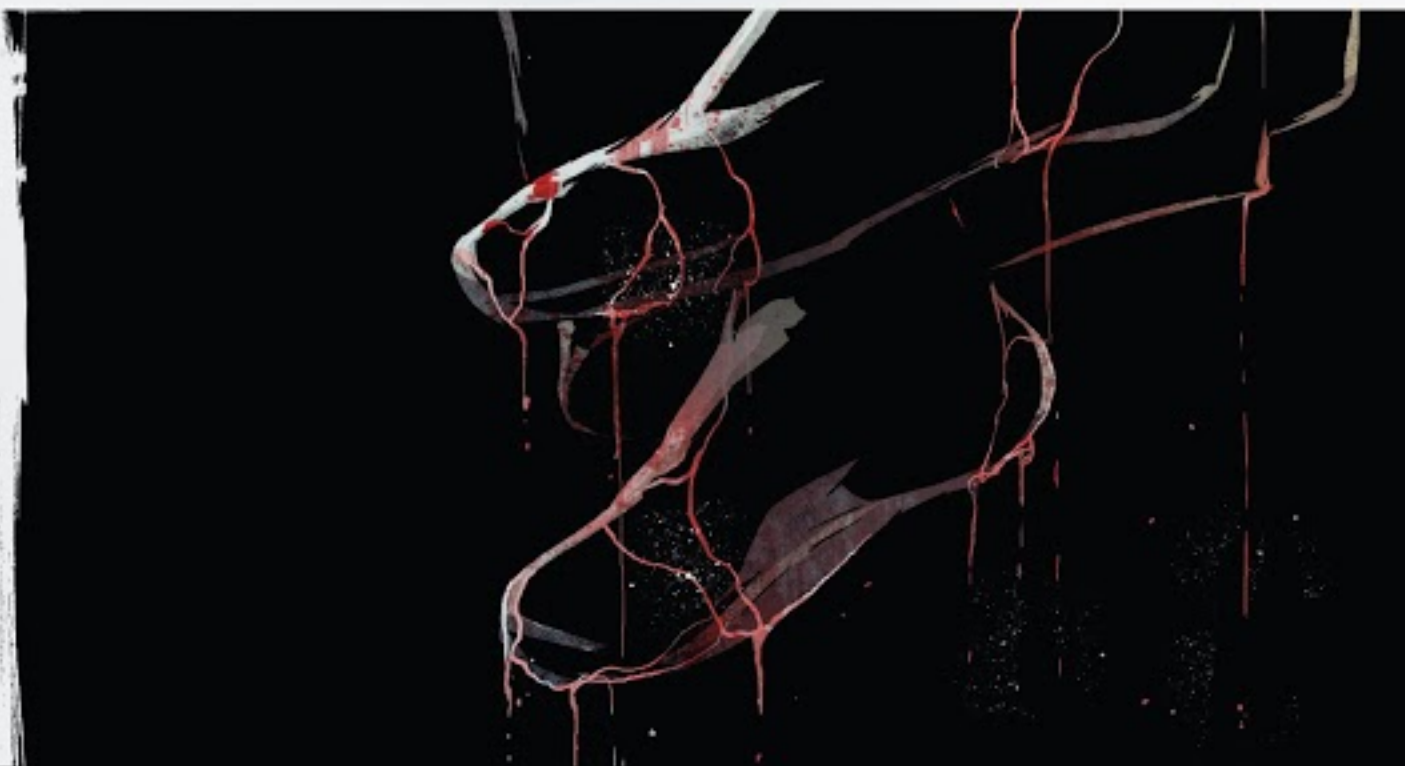
PERHAPS.

BUT
YOU
HUMANS
ALL HAVE A
BREAKING
POINT. A
WEAKNESS.
I'LL FIND
HIS.

JUST
LIKE I DID
YOURS.



REMEMBER?





REMEMBER?!

THE ONLY
MISTAKE I
MADE THEN
WAS LETTING
YOU LIVE! I'M
HERE TO
CORRECT
THAT!

He's
coming
for you.



THEN
LET HIM
COME.

I'M
WAITING
FOR
HIM.



YOU
HEAR ME
DOWNING?
COME OUT.
COME OUT.
WHEREVER
YOU...



...are...?





NEXT: THE RETURN OF THE WINGS OF REDEMPTION



i
image
241
DIGITAL EDITION

SPAWN®



McFARLANE
inspired
by ERIK

+fco

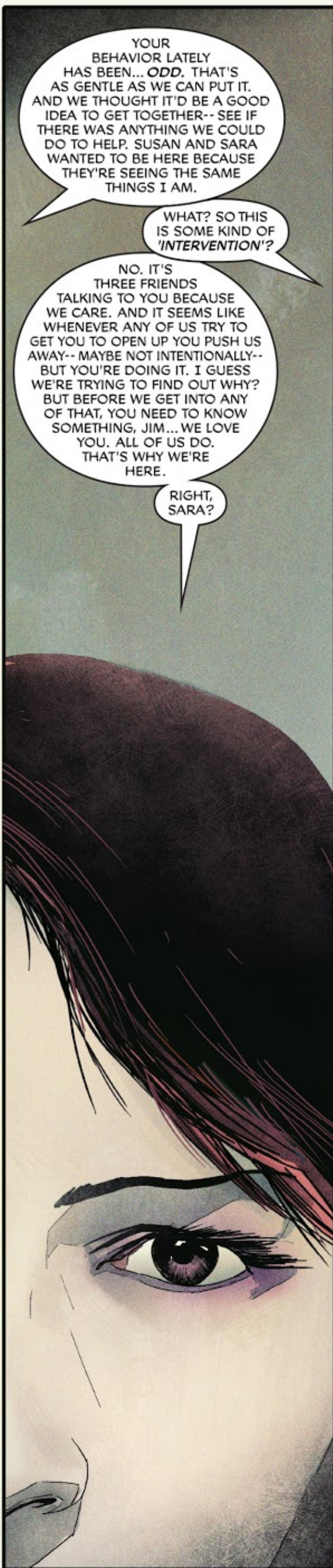
THE
ANGEL OF
DEATH

you SEP 4



OKAY,
I'M SITTING.
SO TELL ME--
WHAT'S THIS
ABOUT?

WE WANTED
TO TALK WITH YOU
BECAUSE WE'RE
CONCERNED...



YOUR
BEHAVIOR LATELY
HAS BEEN... *ODD*. THAT'S
AS GENTLE AS WE CAN PUT IT.
AND WE THOUGHT IT'D BE A GOOD
IDEA TO GET TOGETHER-- SEE IF
THERE WAS ANYTHING WE COULD
DO TO HELP. SUSAN AND SARA
WANTED TO BE HERE BECAUSE
THEY'RE SEEING THE SAME
THINGS I AM.

WHAT? SO THIS
IS SOME KIND OF
'INTERVENTION'?

NO. IT'S
THREE FRIENDS
TALKING TO YOU BECAUSE
WE CARE. AND IT SEEMS LIKE
WHenever ANY OF US TRY TO
GET YOU TO OPEN UP YOU PUSH US
AWAY-- MAYBE NOT INTENTIONALLY--
BUT YOU'RE DOING IT. I GUESS
WE'RE TRYING TO FIND OUT WHY?
BUT BEFORE WE GET INTO ANY
OF THAT, YOU NEED TO KNOW
SOMETHING, JIM... WE LOVE
YOU. ALL OF US DO.
THAT'S WHY WE'RE
HERE.

RIGHT,
SARA?



RIGHT.
WE'RE NOT
HERE TO
GANG UP ON
YOU.

SADLY,
WE CAN'T EVEN
PRETEND TO KNOW
WHAT YOU'VE BEEN
GOING THROUGH.
BUT WHATEVER IT IS--
YOU HAVE TO LET
US BE A PART
OF IT.



LOOK, GUYS,
I APPRECIATE YOUR
CONCERN. IN FACT I'M
QUITE TOUCHED BY YOU
WANTING TO DO THIS. BUT...
I'M GOOD. **REALLY.** I'M
SORRY IF I'VE BEEN A BIT
DIFFICULT. OBVIOUSLY, THAT
WASN'T MY INTENTION.
I JUST NEEDED TO SORT
A FEW THINGS OUT
ON MY OWN.

AND
NOW YOU'RE
FINE?

YEP.

WELL,
JIM--I DON'T
BELIEVE
YOU!

SUSAN!

I GET
YOU'VE BEEN
TRYING TO FIND
YOUR PAST AND
HOW FRUSTRATING
THAT MUST BE. BUT
THE OTHER STUFF-- WE
CAN'T UNDERSTAND
WHY YOU WON'T
LET US HELP YOU
OUT WITH THAT
MORE.

WHAT
OTHER
STUFF?

LIKE ALL THAT
MERCHANDISING
CRAP RAMUS IS MAKING
WITH YOUR IMAGE ON IT.
YOU KEEP SAYING HOW
THAT PISSES YOU OFF, BUT
EVERY TIME I MENTION IT
YOU CHANGE THE
SUBJECT.



SO, IF IT BUGS YOU THAT MUCH, DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. OR LET US.

CAN I JUST GO ON RECORD AND SAY THAT WHAT RAMUS DID WAS 'DICKISH'. WHAT DO YOU THINK, SARA?

I CAN TALK TO HIM. TELL HIM HOW YOU FEEL. WHAT'S HE GOING TO DO? PULL HIS FUNDING FOR THE FOUNDATION BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT HIM MAKING ANYMORE POSTERS? OF COURSE NOT!

IT'S NOT THE WORD I'D USE... BUT I AGREE.



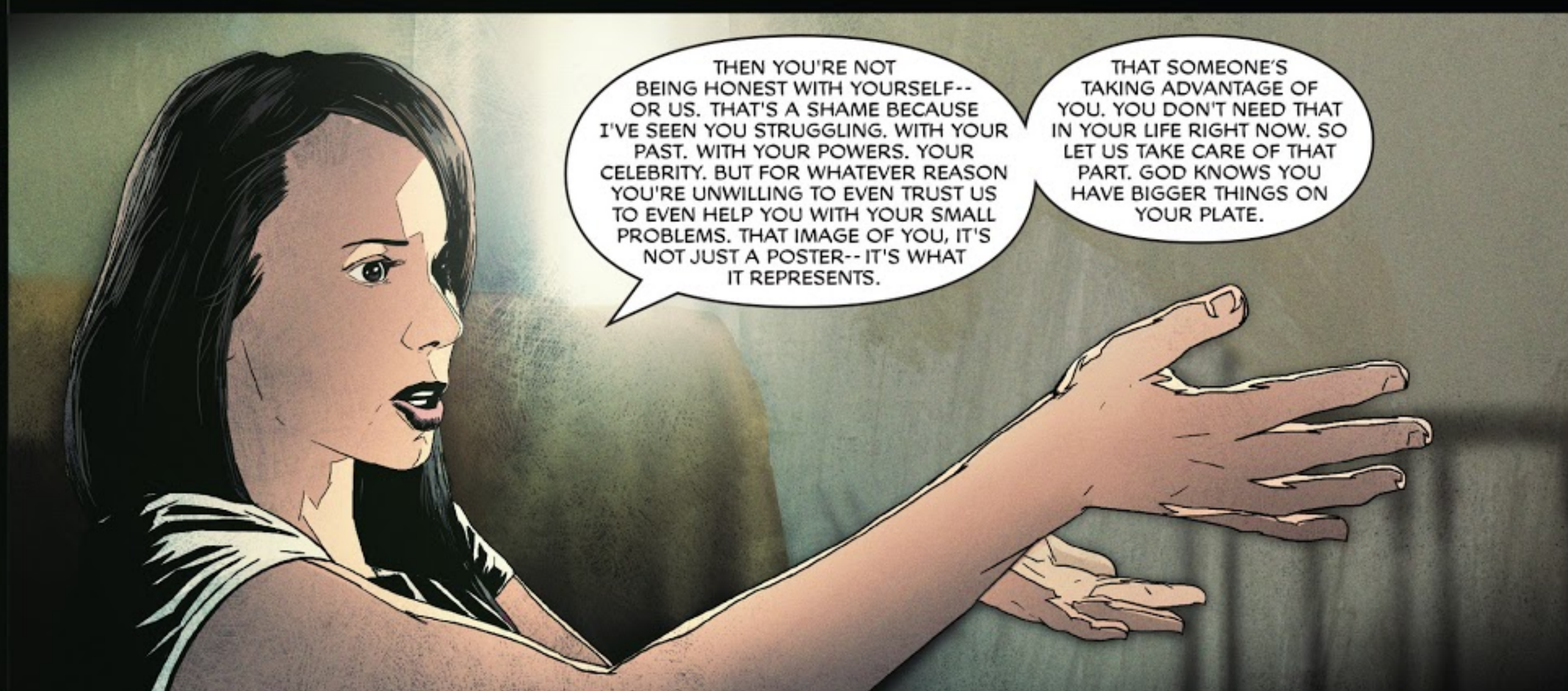
THAT POSTER UP BEHIND ME-- YOU PUT IT UP TO WHAT? RUB IT IN?

I PUT IT UP AS A TALKING POINT. SOMETHING TO GET THIS CONVERSATION GOING. SO, LOOK AT IT AND TELL ME THAT THING DOESN'T IRRITATE YOU.



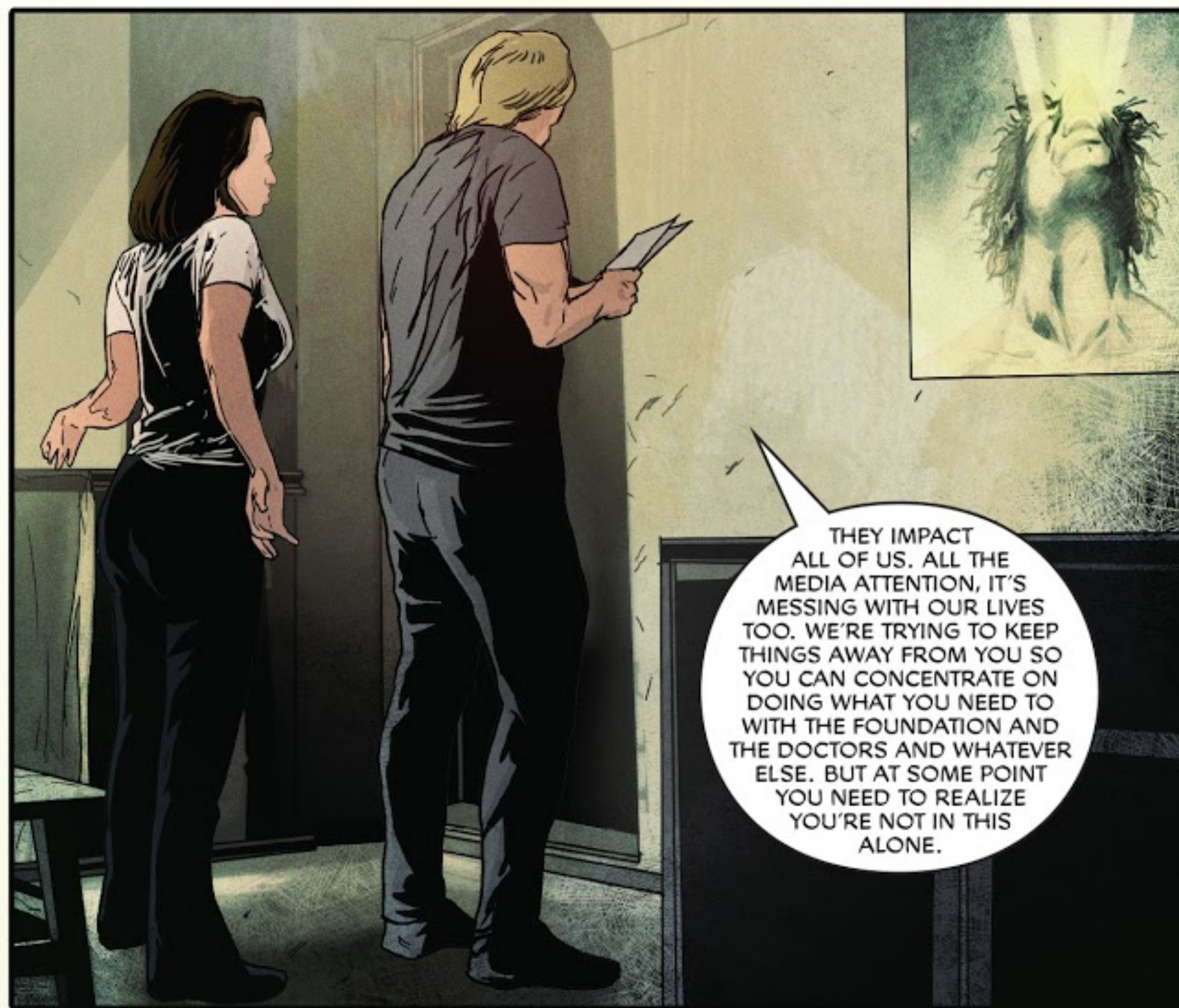
NOPE.

NOT A BIG DEAL.



THEN YOU'RE NOT BEING HONEST WITH YOURSELF-- OR US. THAT'S A SHAME BECAUSE I'VE SEEN YOU STRUGGLING. WITH YOUR PAST. WITH YOUR POWERS. YOUR CELEBRITY. BUT FOR WHATEVER REASON YOU'RE UNWILLING TO EVEN TRUST US TO EVEN HELP YOU WITH YOUR SMALL PROBLEMS. THAT IMAGE OF YOU, IT'S NOT JUST A POSTER-- IT'S WHAT IT REPRESENTS.

THAT SOMEONE'S TAKING ADVANTAGE OF YOU. YOU DON'T NEED THAT IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW. SO LET US TAKE CARE OF THAT PART. GOD KNOWS YOU HAVE BIGGER THINGS ON YOUR PLATE.





YOU'RE RIGHT. I NEED TO DO A BETTER JOB OF COMMUNICATING WITH YOU GUYS. SO, FROM NOW ON, WHEN I'M AROUND YOU GUYS I'LL SMILE AND BE CHARMING!

STOP IT! WE DON'T DESERVE YOUR SARCASM. NOT WHEN ALL WE DO IS BEND OVER BACKWARDS TRYING TO SUPPORT YOU.

MARC IS DOWN AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE EVERY DAY MAKING SURE THE PROTESTORS DON'T GET OUT OF HAND BECAUSE HE DOESN'T WANT YOU TO GET ANYMORE BAD PRESS THAN IS NECESSARY. BUT WHEN REPORTERS ASK HIM-- OR US-- WHY YOU KEEP DISAPPEARING... WE'D RATHER NOT LIE ABOUT IT. WHICH WE'VE BEEN DOING.



IS THAT OKAY WITH YOU?

SARA, YOU DON'T HAVE TO PROTECT ME.



LOOK, DUDE, I DON'T WANT TO ADD TO YOUR PROBLEMS, BUT SARA'S RIGHT. YOU DON'T LET US IN YOUR HEAD-- THAT MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR ALL OF US.

SO WHAT DO I DO?



One Night Earlier.





koff!

koff!

IS IT
GONE?

IS WHAT
GONE?

YOUR
SYMBIOTE! *
DID YOU GET IT
UNDER...

* See last issue--Todd



...CONTROL?

IT'S NOT
POSSIBLE!
NOT LIKE
THIS.

I'M IN
NO MOOD,
OLD MAN! YOU
HAVE SOMETHING
TO SAY THEN
SAY IT!

YOUR
WINGS--
HOW LONG
HAVE YOU
HAD
THEM?

I DON'T
KNOW. THEY
APPEARED WHEN
I WAS FIGHTING
MALEBOLGIA. THAT
WAS ABOUT A
MONTH AGO.
WHY?

LISTEN TO ME
VERY CAREFULLY-- THE
ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION
IS VERY CRUCIAL. I SAW YOU
WITH THE WINGS IN YOUR
HUMAN FORM. THAT I UNDER-
STAND. BUT WHAT I NEED TO
KNOW IS HOW LONG HAVE YOU
HAD THOSE WINGS **AND**
YOUR BLACK COSTUME
AT THE SAME TIME?

I DON'T
KNOW.

THEN
THINK!
BECAUSE YOUR
ANSWER MAY
MAKE ALL THE
DIFFERENCE
TO THIS
WORLD.

I GUESS
IT'S...

I DON'T
WANT A
GUESS! I NEED
A DEFINITIVE
ANSWER!

NOW.

THE
FIRST TIME
THIS HAS
HAPPENED
IS RIGHT
NOW.

THAT'S WHAT
I THOUGHT. WE
NEED TO GET BACK
TO THE 'DEAD
ZONE'!

I KNOW WHY MY
POWERS WERE STILL ALIVE WHEN
WE WERE IN HERE BEFORE.* IT'S BECAUSE
OF YOU. YOU'RE ABLE TO CHANNEL HEAVEN
OR HELL WHENEVER YOU WANT. NO SPAWN'S
BEEN ABLE TO DO THAT. BUT YOUR PROBLEM
NOW IS THAT IF *BLUDD* OR THE *CLOWN* OR
YOUR COSTUME, ARE EVER ABLE TO CON-
TROL YOU... THEY'LL HAVE A CONDUIT
DIRECTLY TO HEAVEN.

AND THEY KNOW
THAT WITH YOUR POWERS,
YOU'RE NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE
TO DEFEAT. SO THEY'LL ATTACK
THOSE CLOSEST TO YOU INSTEAD.
EVERYONE YOU KNOW IS A
TARGET. THEY'LL USE THAT
AGAINST YOU. THEY WON'T TRY
AND BEAT YOU-- THEY'LL GET
YOU TO SURRENDER
INSTEAD.

I DON'T
ENVY YOU OR
YOUR POWERS
ANYMORE.

BECAUSE
THE BEST YOU
CAN HOPE FOR IS
TO WATCH OVER
THEM BUT NOT
GET CLOSE.



I GIVE
YOU AS
MUCH AS I
CAN.

BUT
THERE'LL BE
TIMES I'LL
NEED TO GET
AWAY.

BE ON
MY
OWN.



JIM... WE
HAD NO
IDEA.

YOU'VE
FOUND YOUR
PAST?



JUST
PIECES OF
IT. AND MOST
OF IT'S UGLY
TO SAY THE
LEAST.

WHAT
ABOUT YOUR
NAME? DID
YOU FIND THAT
TOO?



**GOD
DAMN
IT, SUSAN!**
IT DOESN'T MATTER
WHAT MY NAME IS!
BECAUSE EVEN IF I
WANTED, I COULDN'T
TELL YOU!

THE LESS
ANY OF YOU KNOW,
THE BETTER! SO
LET'S JUST DROP
ALL THIS! I'M JIM
DOWNING!
PERIOD!

THAT'S
ALL YOU
NEED TO
KNOW!

I JUST
WANTED TO
KNOW...

I DON'T
GIVE A SHIT
WHAT YOU
WANT!



THAT'S ENOUGH! SHE DOESN'T DESERVE THAT ATTITUDE! SHE WAS JUST ASKING OUT OF CONCERN.

WE DIDN'T KNOW YOU'D GOTTEN CLUES TO YOUR PAST.



EVEN IF I DID-- SUSAN'S ALWAYS FAWNING OVER ME ABOUT EVERYTHING? IF I NEED HER HELP I'LL ASK FOR IT!



WELL, LET ME TELL YOU WHAT I DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT! YOU AND YOUR BULLSHIT ATTITUDE! I'M SICK OF IT! YOU WANT TO FEEL SORRY FOR YOURSELF -- GO AHEAD, BE MY GUEST. BUT DON'T YOU DARE TAKE OUT YOUR FRUSTRATIONS ON SUSAN AGAIN.

YOU HEAR ME?

BECAUSE I'LL DROP YOU WHERE YOU STAND NEXT TIME.

WHOA! WHOA! RELAX BIG FELLA.



C'MON, SUSAN! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. I KNEW THIS WAS A BAD IDEA.



WELL... THAT WENT EXCELLENT, I THINK.

THIS ISN'T A JOKE, JIM. NONE OF IT IS.



MARC?

DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS? ABOUT HIS WIFE?

NO!

YES!

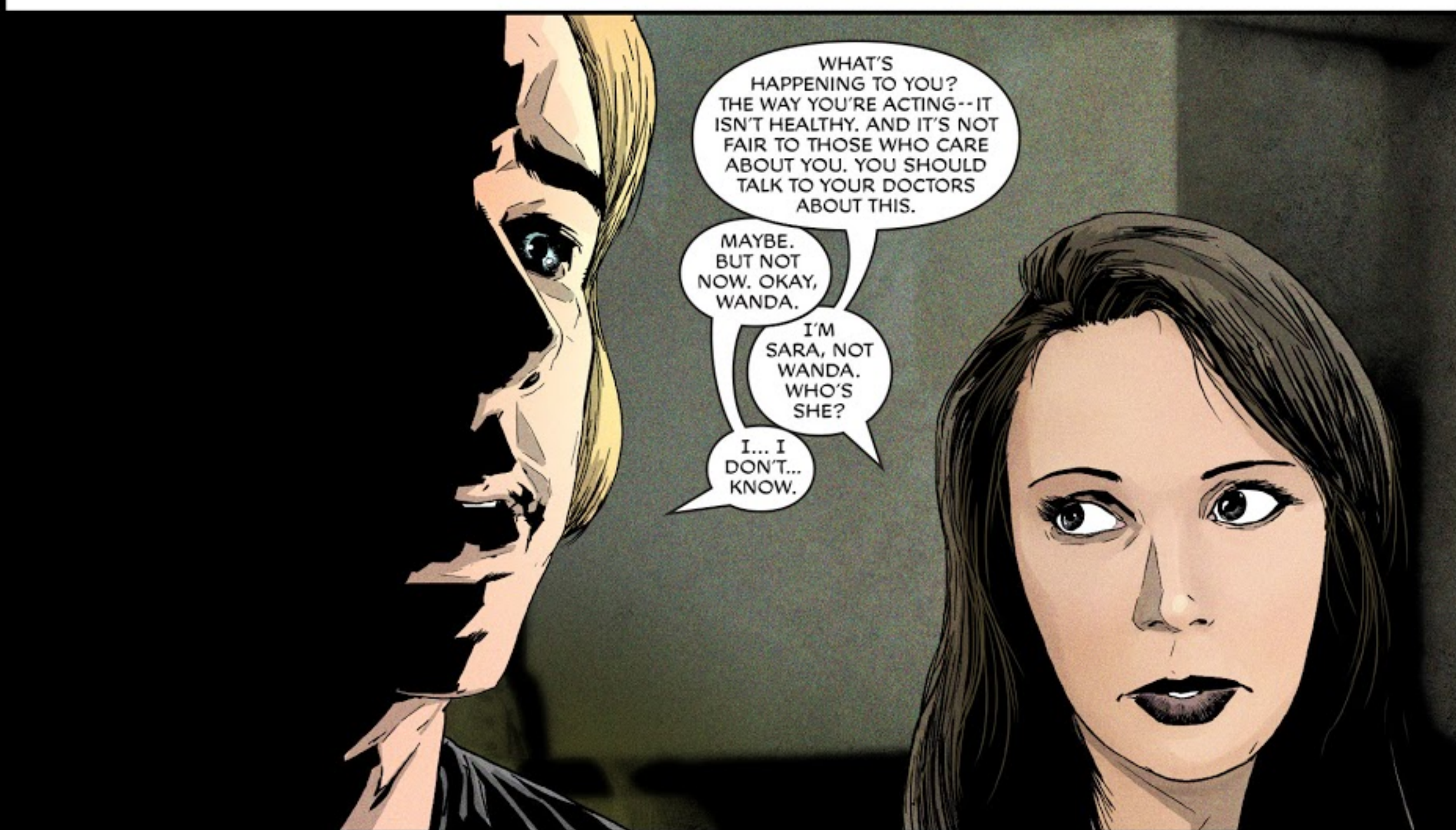
I MEAN... I DON'T KNOW! HE GAVE ME A PHOTO TO DO SOME RESEARCH, BUT IT DIDN'T LEAD ME ANYWHERE.



SO YOU'RE SAYING JIM FOUND OUT ABOUT SOME OF HIS PAST AND YOU *KNEW NOTHING* ABOUT THAT? NONE OF IT? AND NOW YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO KEEP HIS FOUNDATION RUNNING WITHOUT KNOWING WHO HE IS? THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. IF JIM FOUND HIS ANSWERS, EVENTUALLY REPORTERS WILL TOO?

I KNOW. I'LL DEAL WITH THAT LATER. BUT FOR NOW... HOW ARE YOU DOING? YOU WENT KINDA QUIET WHEN JIM SNAPPED AT YOU.

I'M FINE. BUT THE WAY YOU STOOD UP FOR ME BACK THERE... THAT WAS SWEET. THANK YOU.



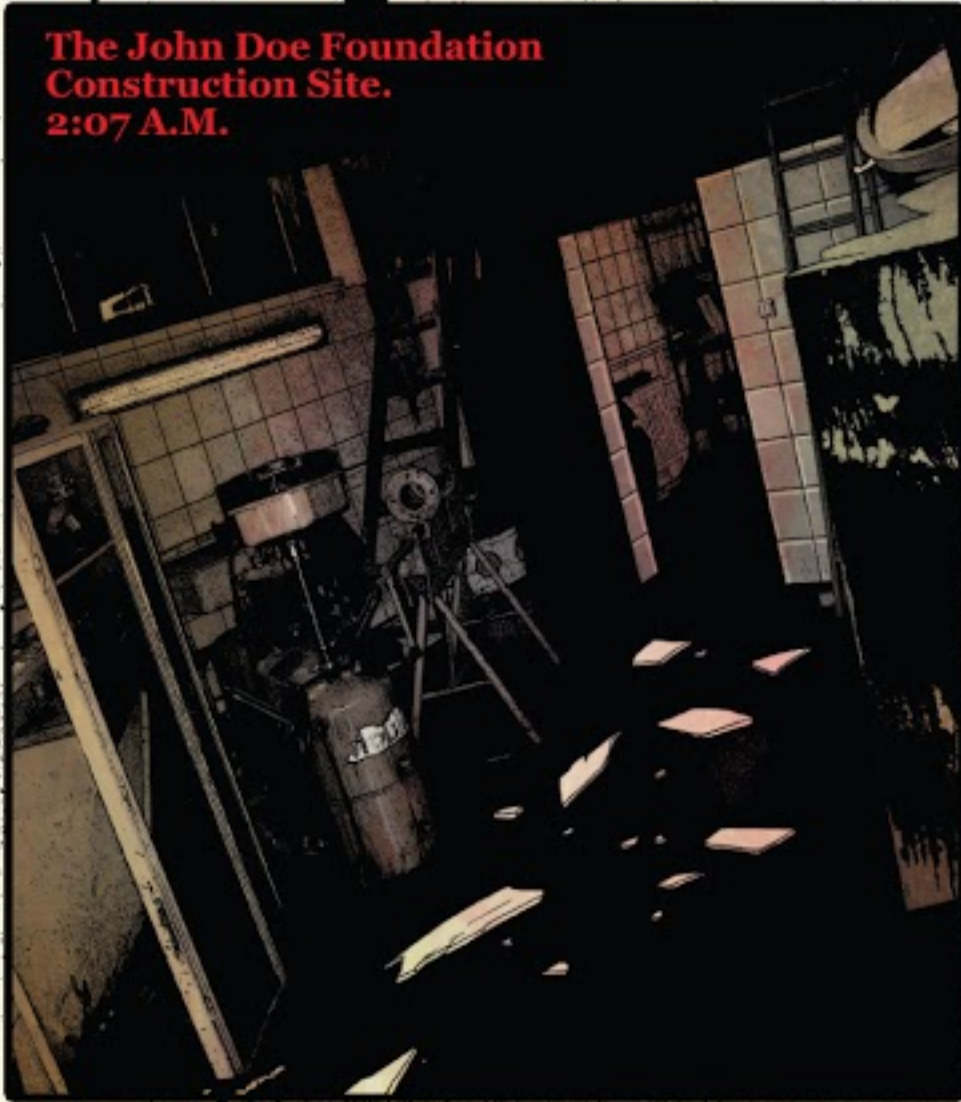
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOU? THE WAY YOU'RE ACTING--IT ISN'T HEALTHY, AND IT'S NOT FAIR TO THOSE WHO CARE ABOUT YOU. YOU SHOULD TALK TO YOUR DOCTORS ABOUT THIS.

MAYBE. BUT NOT NOW. OKAY, WANDA.

I'M SARA, NOT WANDA. WHO'S SHE?

I... I DON'T... KNOW.

The John Doe Foundation
Construction Site.
2:07 A.M.



HOW DID
DOWNING
BREACH YOUR
SECURITY?



IT WASN'T
DOWNING. IT
WAS COGLIOSTRO.
HE LEVELED THEM
AND THEN
BROUGHT THE
SPAWN HERE.



COGLIOSTRO?
HE'S BACK? COOL!
BUT OBVIOUSLY HE
ACQUIRED NEW
POWERS WHILE
SITTING ON HELL'S
THRONE.

WE'LL
NEED TO
KEEP AN EYE
ON HIM
TOO.



BUT, YOU
STILL HAVEN'T
TOLD ME
WHAT ALL THIS IS
ABOUT, BLUDD.
I'M HOPING
THIS ISN'T SOME
KIND
OF TRAP.

YOU
ALWAYS
WERE A
SKEPTIC,
SOLOMON.
JUST
FOLLOW
ME...



...IT'S IN
HERE.

A
'DEAD ZONE'?
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT
IT IS. THE SAME THING
WE'VE BOTH BEEN
LOOKING FOR.

HOW'D
YOU
FIND IT?

DOWNING. HE LED US
TO IT WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING.
AND THEN IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER TO
PURCHASE THE LAND UNDER THE GUISE
OF ERECTING A FOUNDATION TO CURE THE
TERMINALLY ILL. HELL, THE CITY EVEN GAVE ME
SOME TAX BREAKS FOR IT. CAN YOU IMAGINE?
I FINALLY FIND THE PORTAL TO HEAVEN AND
THESE GOD FORSAKEN HUMANS FIGURE OUT
A WAY TO 'INCENTIVIZE' ME TO BUY IT AT A
DISCOUNT. THEIR STUPIDITY NEVER
CEASES TO AMAZE ME.

This had
better be
important. I
told you not
to call me.

IS THIS...
NO! IT CAN'T
BE! THIS ISN'T
WHAT I THINK
IT IS?

I'LL TELL YOU
WHAT'S AMAZING.
THIS!
THIS PERFECT PATCH OF
DIRT COULD BE THE CATALYST
ALL OUR VAMPIRE CLANS
NEED TO STOP FIGHTING
ONE ANOTHER AND
JOIN FORCES
INSTEAD.

CAN YOU
PICTURE
THE LOOK ON
GOD'S FACE
IF WE DID
THAT?





THAT'S
EXACTLY
WHAT I'M
PLANNING
TO SEE...

GOD'S
FACE.
IS THAT
POSSIBLE..?



I
KNOW
IT IS!



UM... SORRY
TO INTERRUPT,
MR. RAMUS, BUT
THERE'S A
MESSAGE.



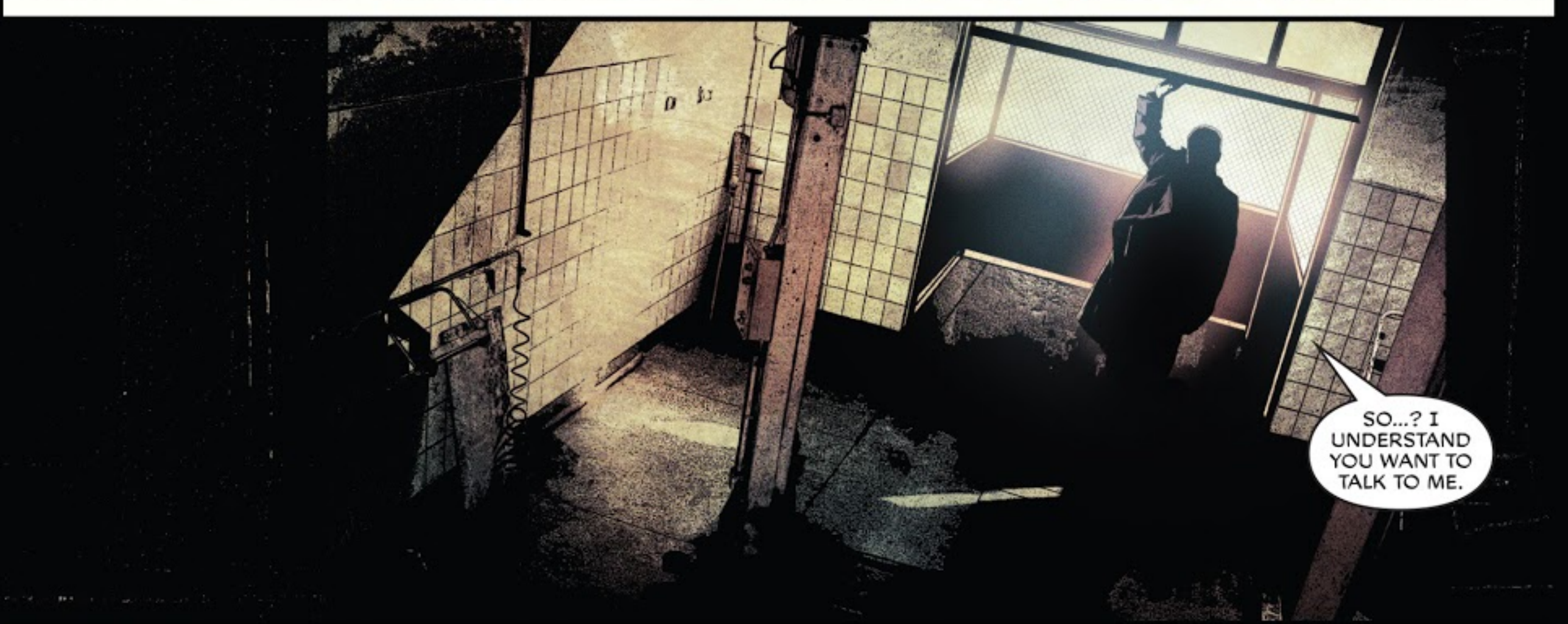
THEY'RE
ON THE TOP
FLOOR,
WAITING.



EXCUSE
ME, SOLOMON.
DON'T MEAN TO BE
RUDE, BUT...



THERE'S
BUSINESS I
NEED TO
ATTEND TO.



SO...? I UNDERSTAND YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME.



THAT'S RIGHT.

THEN SPEAK. AND MAKE IT QUICK-- I'M RATHER BUSY RIGHT NOW.

WE'LL GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT. AS YOU'RE AWARE MR. RAMUS, YOU AND YOUR CORPORATIONS HAVE CERTAIN OBLIGATIONS TO YOUR OTHER FINANCIAL PARTNERS. IT'S COME TO OUR ATTENTION THAT THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS BUILDING HASN'T BEEN VETTED THROUGH THE PROPER CHANNELS.



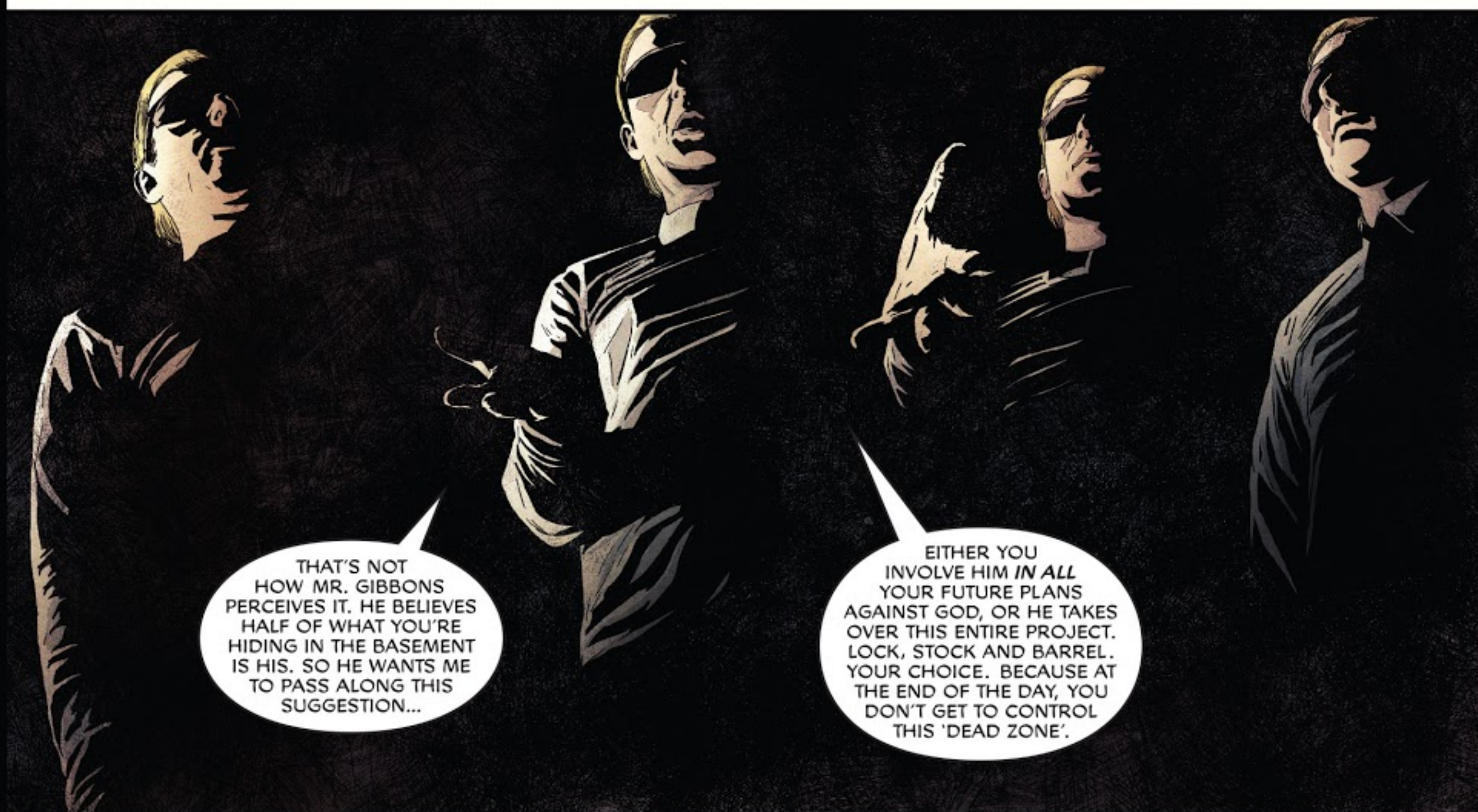
ALL THE LAYERS HAVE GIVEN FINAL SIGNATURES. EVERYONE'S BEEN SATISFIED SO FAR.

NOT QUITE.

YOU SEE, WE FOUND OUT THAT THERE IS MORE VALUE TO THIS PROPERTY THAN YOU'VE LED US TO BELIEVE. OUR BOSS DOESN'T LIKE THAT YOU'RE NOT SHARING WITH HIM.

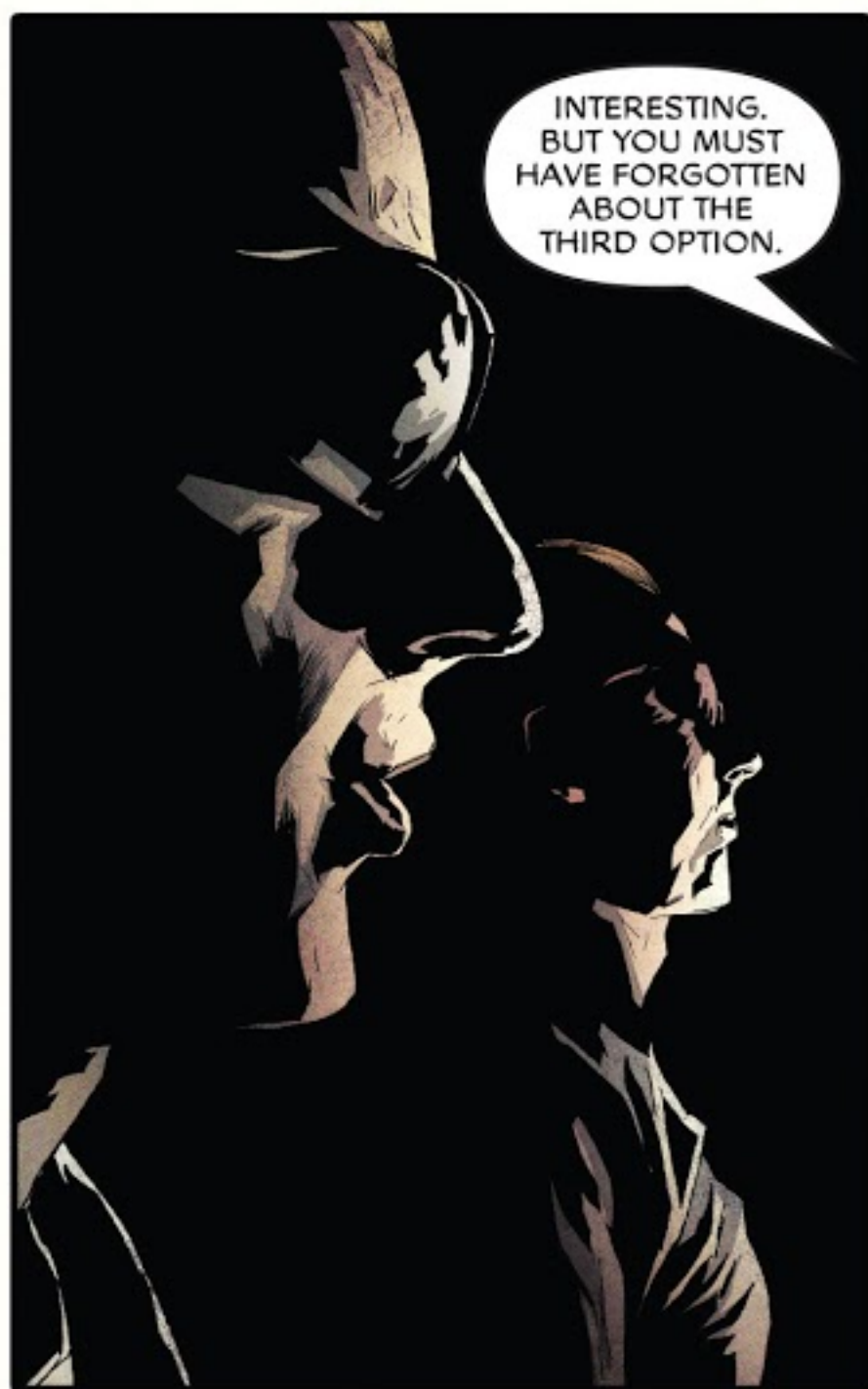


HE'S BEEN
PAID IN FULL!
I DON'T OWE HIM
MORE THAN
THAT!



THAT'S NOT
HOW MR. GIBBONS
PERCEIVES IT. HE BELIEVES
HALF OF WHAT YOU'RE
HIDING IN THE BASEMENT
IS HIS. SO HE WANTS ME
TO PASS ALONG THIS
SUGGESTION...

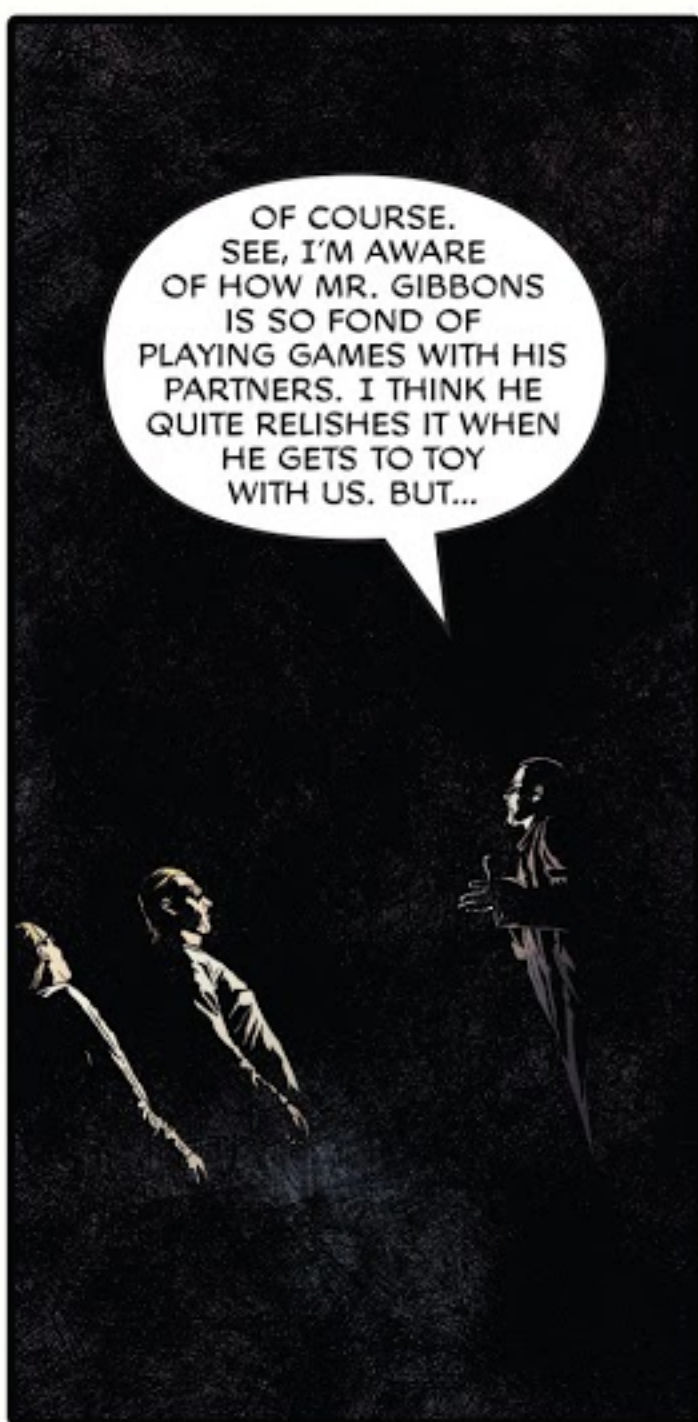
EITHER YOU
INVOLVE HIM *IN ALL*
YOUR FUTURE PLANS
AGAINST GOD, OR HE TAKES
OVER THIS ENTIRE PROJECT.
LOCK, STOCK AND BARREL.
YOUR CHOICE. BECAUSE AT
THE END OF THE DAY, YOU
DON'T GET TO CONTROL
THIS 'DEAD ZONE'.



INTERESTING.
BUT YOU MUST
HAVE FORGOTTEN
ABOUT THE
THIRD OPTION.



THERE'S
A THIRD
ONE?



OF COURSE.
SEE, I'M AWARE
OF HOW MR. GIBBONS
IS SO FOND OF
PLAYING GAMES WITH HIS
PARTNERS. I THINK HE
QUITE RELISHES IT WHEN
HE GETS TO TOY
WITH US. BUT...

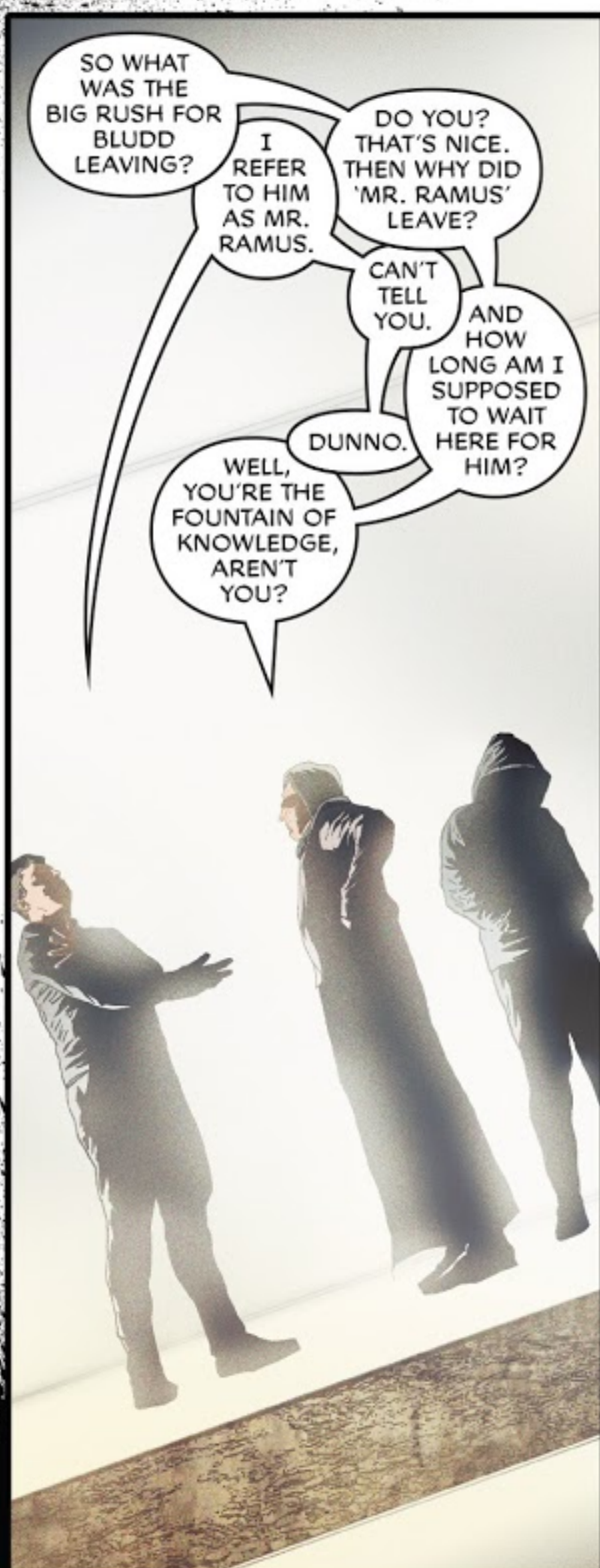


THIS HAS NEVER BEEN A GAME. A MISTAKE LIKE THAT CAN GET YOU KILLED.

SO TELL YOUR BOSS...



IF HE EVER THREATENS ME AGAIN--
I'LL KILL HIM!
HIS WIFE! AND ALL HIS CHILDREN!!



SO WHAT WAS THE BIG RUSH FOR BLUDD LEAVING?

I REFER TO HIM AS MR. RAMUS.

DO YOU? THAT'S NICE. THEN WHY DID 'MR. RAMUS' LEAVE?

CAN'T TELL YOU.

AND HOW LONG AM I SUPPOSED TO WAIT HERE FOR HIM?

DUNNO.

WELL, YOU'RE THE FOUNTAIN OF KNOWLEDGE, AREN'T YOU?



UM... GUYS?



WHAT THE HELL'S THAT?

I'M YOUR
REDEEMER!
YOUR ANGEL OF
DEATH!

TO BE CONTINUED



SPAWN®



THE
'DEAD
ZONE'
IS MINE!

McFARIANE
AFTER
GREG
+fco

DID YOU
THINK WE WOULD
JUST STAND BY AND
LET YOU TAKE
WHATEVER YOU
WANTED?

OR ANY
BLOOD
SHED?
WITHOUT
A FIGHT?





I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT BETTER OF THOSE WHO CLAIM TO BE OF 'THE OLD GUARD.'

OH... WE KNEW THERE'D BE A FIGHT. WE WERE JUST HOPING GOD WOULD HAVE MADE IT MORE OF A CHALLENGE THAN SENDING YOU.



GOD DIDN'T SEND ME. YOUR SIDE DID.

BUT THAT ARROGANCE IS WHY YOUR KIND HAS BEEN SO EASILY SLAUGHTERED OVER THE CENTURIES.

SLAUGHTERED?!

WE TORE A PATH THROUGH THE LAST ARMY OF ANGELS THAT CAME OUR WAY. YOU MAY WANT TO ASK WHY YOUR FEMALES SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED. THE FEAR IN THEIR FACES WAS A *MARVEL* TO BEHOLD! AND IF THEY COULDN'T STOP US-- IMAGINE WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU.

ALRIGHT, BOYS... CIRCLE HIM.



I USUALLY DON'T DO THIS... BUT WE'RE GOING TO GIVE YOU A CHOICE. EITHER YOU LAY DOWN YOUR SWORD AND PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO HELL BEFORE WE KILL YOU-- OR I MAKE SURE GOD KNOWS YOU FAILED TO PROTECT HIS ENTRANCE TO THE 'DEAD ZONE.' HE'LL BANISH YOU TO HELL FOR THAT!

EITHER WAY YOU'RE OURS! SO TAKE YOUR PICK.



IT'S TOO BAD WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR BROTHER.

MY BROTHER...?

YOU KNOW ABOUT HIM? WHERE HE'S AT? WHERE HE DISAPPEARED TO?*

DO YOU?

*Issue 206--TODD



TELL ME!



AND I DON'T GIVE A SHIT THAT YOU'RE GOD'S CHOSEN ONE!

YOU'RE NOT
LISTENING!

GOD
DIDN'T
SEND
ME!



OUR BOSS WILL
BE DISAPPOINTED
YOU'VE DENIED HIS
REQUEST.*

BECAUSE WHETHER
YOU WANT TO ACCEPT IT OR
NOT-- FACTIONS ARE BEGINNING TO
SPLIT IN BOTH CELESTIAL CAMPS. HELL
WILL FIGURE OUT YOU'VE BETRAYED
HER AND HEAVEN WILL NO LONGER
SHIELD YOUR ACTIONS.

YOU'LL BE CUT
OFF FROM BOTH. AND
AFTER ALL THE CENTURIES YOU
TRIED BUILDING A HAVEN FOR
YOUR PEOPLE-- THAT'LL ALL
BE AT RISK. NEITHER SIDE
WILL TRUST YOU.

* Last Issue-- TODD

THAT
WOULD
TRULY BE A
SHAME.



AWW... SO NOW ALL
OF A SUDDEN YOU GIVE A SHIT
WHAT HAPPENS TO ME? INTERESTING...
SEE, I THOUGHT THE ONLY REASON YOU
WORKED FOR GIBBONS WAS BECAUSE YOU
FAILED TO MAKE THE CUT INTO GOD'S BATTALION.
WHAT WAS IT I HEARD? OH, THAT'S RIGHT!...
YOU ALBINOS COULDN'T STOMACH BEING
IN THE LINE OF FIRE. DIDN'T WANT TO
GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY. YOU WERE
TOO FAR ABOVE ALL THAT
HOLY WAR B.S.



SEE, WHAT
YOU GENTLEMEN DON'T
WANT TO ACCEPT IS THAT
YOU WERE HIRED TO BE
ASSISTANTS. BUT YOUR
BOSS MADE ME HIS
PARTNER.

AND I'M SURE
HE'S TOLD YOU THAT
IF YOU WERE TO EVEN
LIFT A FINGER TOWARDS
ME RIGHT NOW... IT'D BE
THE LAST THING YOU'D
EVER DO.

AND I'M ALSO
SURE MR. GIBBONS
KNOWS THAT I'D RATHER
DIE TRYING TO KILL HIS
FAMILY, THAN FOR HIM TO
TREAT ME LIKE I'M ONE OF
HIS *ALBINO DOGS*. SO
YOU MAKE IT AS CLEAR
AS YOU CAN TO
HIM...





...THAT WHEN THE TIME COMES, I'LL EXPECT HIM TO BETRAY HIS GOD AS READILY AS HE IS ME. HE DOES THAT-- HE CAN HAVE THE 'DEAD ZONE' ONCE I'M IN.



ALL OF IT?

EVERY SPECK.



LOOK AT THEM. LIKE LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER.

WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO, SOLOMON, JUST STAND HERE AND LET 'EM DIE?

FOR NOW.

WHY?

THIS ISN'T OUR FIGHT-- NOT NOW AT LEAST. WE CAN'T DEVIATE FROM THE PLAN.



BESIDES, IT'S ONLY BLUDD'S CLAN.



AND I'M RATHER ENJOYING WATCHING THEM SUFFER. ESPECIALLY AFTER ALL THE PAIN THEY'VE INFLECTED ON MY PEOPLE.

A full-page comic book illustration. In the center, a warrior with a blue and gold helmet and armor stands amidst a scene of carnage. The warrior's armor is dark blue with gold accents, including a chest plate and gauntlets. He holds a large, blood-stained sword aloft in his right hand. The ground is covered in blood splatters and the bodies of fallen enemies. In the background, there are dark, jagged rock formations and a bright, hazy light source. The overall tone is dark and violent.

"SO IT'S POETIC
IT'S THEIR BLOOD
DESECRATING THAT
HOLY SPOT."

"IN THE MEANTIME, WE'LL GET
ANOTHER CHANCE TO BREACH
THE PORTAL. WE JUST NEED TO
WAIT THIS ONE OUT."

DELIVER MY
OFFER TO GIBBONS.
TELL HIM HE HAS TWENTY
FOUR HOURS. I DON'T
HEAR FROM HIM BEFORE
THEN-- I'LL ASSUME
THE WORST.

AND DEAL
WITH HIM LIKE
I DO MY OTHER
ENEMIES.

KRUNCH

BUT IF HE
CAN GET ME INSIDE
THE GATES OF HEAVEN,
THE REST IS HIS. I'M
NOT LOOKING TO COME
BACK ONCE I'M DONE
DOING TO GOD
WHAT I'VE ALWAYS
PLANNED!

UNDER-
STOOD.

WE'LL DO
OUR PART TO MAKE
SURE YOUR PATH IS AS
CLEAR AS POSSIBLE.
THE LESS INTERFERENCE
YOU HAVE, THE
BETTER.

Moments Later.

I HEARD
WHAT YOU SAID
TO THEM, BLUDD.
IT'S A PITY YOU'RE
TAKING THEIR
SIDE THROUGH
ALL THIS.

THEY'RE
JUST A
MEANS TO AN
END. NOTHING
MORE.

DOESN'T MATTER.
YOU MADE THE DEAL.
THAT PUTS YOU IN THEIR
CAMP. AND I WONDER HOW
THEY'RE GOING TO FEEL
WHEN THEY FIND OUT YOU'VE
RECRUITED SOLOMON? HE
DOESN'T CARE ABOUT ANY
OF YOUR AGENDAS. IN
FACT, I'D WATCH MY BACK
AROUND HIM IF I
WERE YOU.

YOU HAVE
SOMETHING
TO SAY?

I DO.

YOU'RE CHASING THE
WRONG THING. DOWNING
SHOULD BE YOUR TARGET, NOT
HEAVEN. WITHOUT HIM YOU WON'T
GET ANYWHERE. AND IF YOU
TRY USING THAT 'DEAD ZONE'--
YOU'LL ONLY **SCREW IT UP**
FOR THE REST OF US.

I DON'T
CARE!

I'M
SURE
YOU
DON'T.

BUT YOU WANT
TO KNOW WHAT BUGS
ME THE MOST? WE
COULD'VE MADE A GREAT
TEAM. MY DEMONS AND
YOUR VAMPIRES... WE
WOULD'VE BEEN
UNSTOPPABLE.



I ASKED FOR YOUR HELP BECAUSE I NEEDED IT. YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, THINK YOU CAN GO AT IT ALONE. YOU CAN'T. AND SOLOMON ISN'T GOING TO HELP YOU. HE'S A PUNK-ASS. SO YOU WANT TO GO ROGUE ON THIS, THAT'S YOUR CHOICE.



BUT YOU HAD TO KNOW I'D PROTECT MY INTERESTS TOO.

YOU'RE UNSTABLE EMOTIONALLY-- THAT'S WHAT COST YOU MY TRUST.



THOUGH I'M SURE I'M NOT THE FIRST TO SAY THAT.

YOU AREN'T.

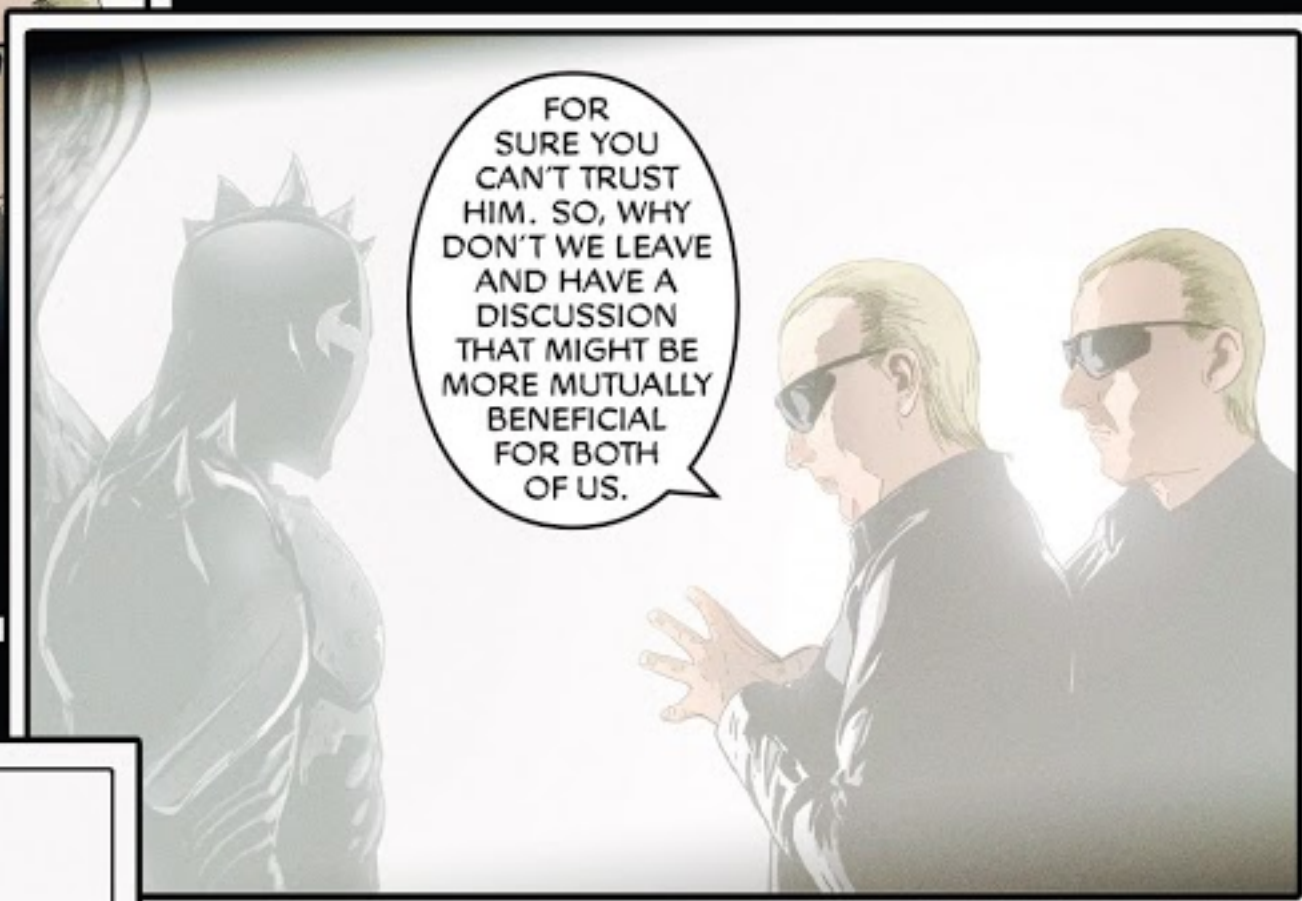
BUT THE THING THAT SURPRISES ME THE MOST IS HOW MANY OF YOU THINK YOU'RE THE ONE THAT'S GOING TO FIGURE THIS WHOLE THING OUT. NEVER MIND THAT NO VAMPIRE HAS EVER SAT ON HELL'S THRONE. GUYS LIKE YOU ALWAYS THINK YOU'RE SPECIAL AND THE RULES DON'T APPLY TO YOU.

WHAT MAKES YOU SO DISAPPOINTING IS YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE 'SMART ONE.'



SILLY ME FOR THINKING THAT WAS TRUE.

SO... YOU WANT TO KEEP DOWNING ALL TO YOURSELF? HAVE AT IT. IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU OWN THE 'DEAD ZONE.' TO PROVE IT I INVITED A GUEST OF MINE, WHO'S HERE RIGHT NOW. YOU SHOULD GO CHECK DOWNSTAIRS. I THINK HE'S LEFT YOU A BUNCH OF GIFTS.





IT'S OVERDUE.



WELL, I APPRECIATE YOU NOT BRINGING THIS UP WHILE MARC AND SUSAN WERE HERE.



NO, THANKS.

SO, DO YOU WANT TO START?

I GUESS.

I... I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THIS A LOT, BUT DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO BRING IT UP. I DIDN'T WANT TO HURT YOUR FEELINGS, BUT I KNOW THAT THE LONGER I HOLD IT INSIDE THE MORE YOU AND I SEEM TO GROW DISTANT. SO I'LL JUST SAY IT AS PLAIN AS I CAN.

YOU SCARE ME AT TIMES-- AND I DON'T WANT TO FEEL THAT TOWARDS YOU. EVER. BUT I CAN'T HELP MYSELF.

SOME OF THE THINGS YOU CAN DO OR THE WAY YOU ACT, IT DOESN'T SEEM... NORMAL. AND I KNOW THAT'S NOT THE RIGHT WORD TO USE GIVEN YOUR SITUATION, BUT IT'S HOW I FEEL. SO HELP ME-- HOW CAN WE GET PAST THIS?

IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIFIC THAT'S BUGGING YOU?

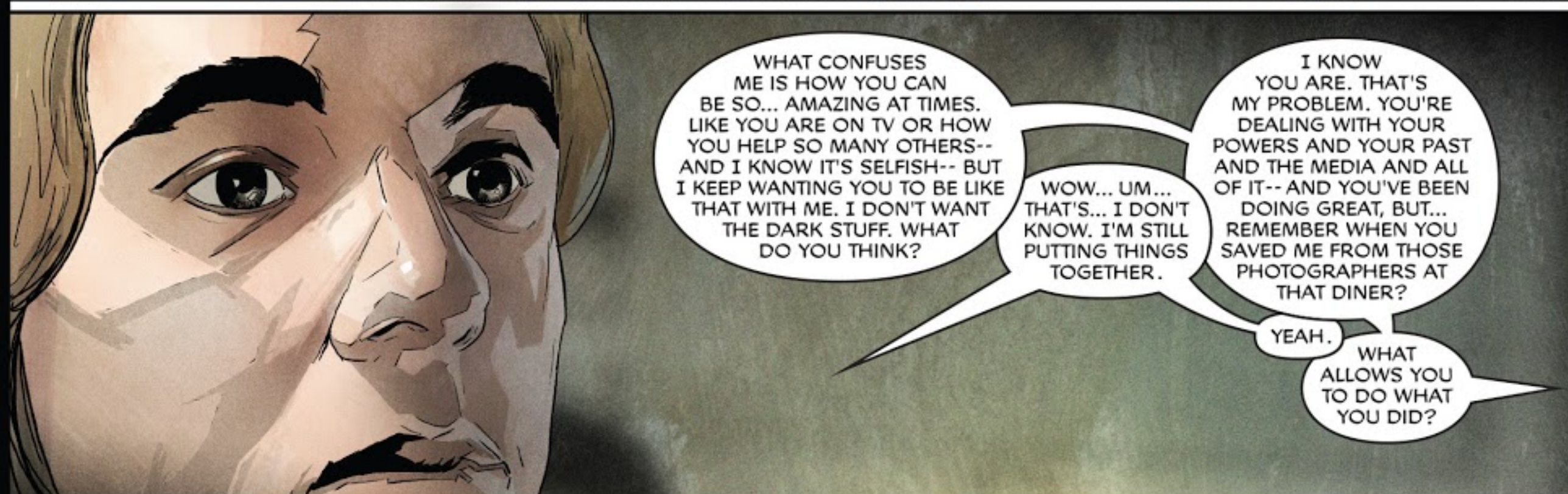




THERE'S DOZENS OF QUESTIONS I WONDER ABOUT. AND I HATE MYSELF FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO JUST ACCEPT EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING ON. THEN TO ADD TO ALL OF IT, I'VE BEEN **STRUGGLING** WITH MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. I KEEP PRAYING HE'LL GIVE ME INSIGHT TO WHAT HIS PLANS ARE FOR THE BOTH OF US. BUT I CAN'T HEAR HIS VOICE. IT'S LIKE... LIKE HE'S LEFT ME. AND IF THAT'S TRUE, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE LEFT THAT I CAN COUNT ON.

THAT'S NOT TRUE, YOU HAVE JUDY.

YOU'RE RIGHT. BUT IT'S NOT THE SAME THING.



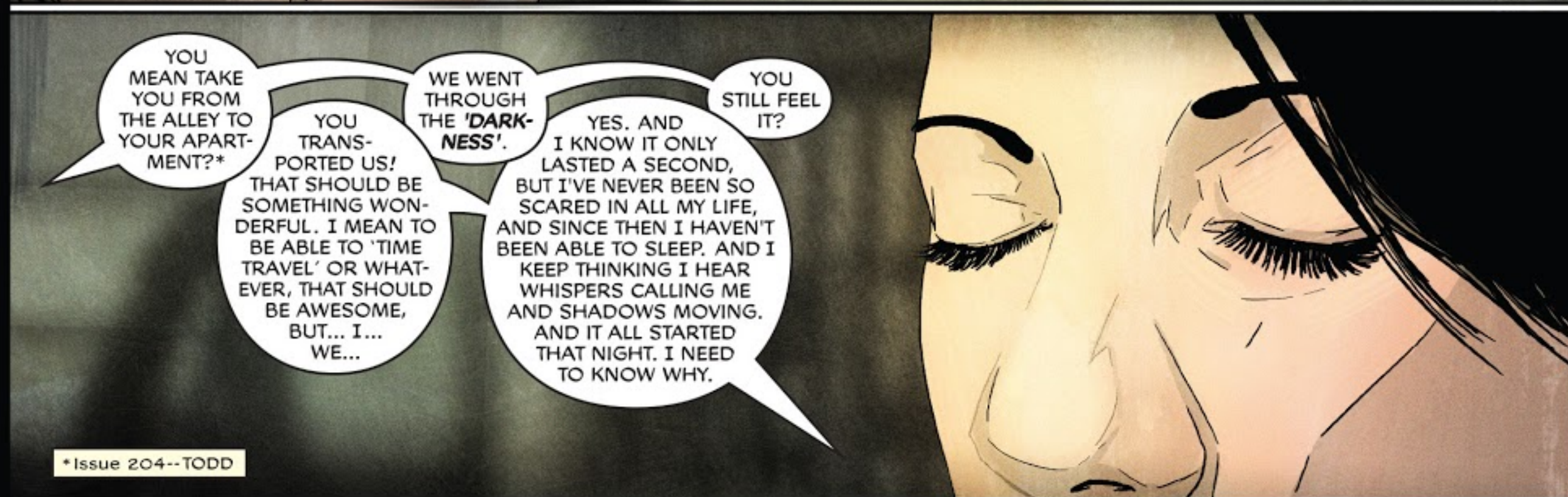
WHAT CONFUSES ME IS HOW YOU CAN BE SO... AMAZING AT TIMES. LIKE YOU ARE ON TV OR HOW YOU HELP SO MANY OTHERS-- AND I KNOW IT'S SELFISH-- BUT I KEEP WANTING YOU TO BE LIKE THAT WITH ME. I DON'T WANT THE DARK STUFF. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WOW... UM... THAT'S... I DON'T KNOW. I'M STILL PUTTING THINGS TOGETHER.

I KNOW YOU ARE. THAT'S MY PROBLEM. YOU'RE DEALING WITH YOUR POWERS AND YOUR PAST AND THE MEDIA AND ALL OF IT-- AND YOU'VE BEEN DOING GREAT, BUT... REMEMBER WHEN YOU SAVED ME FROM THOSE PHOTOGRAPHERS AT THAT DINER?

YEAH.

WHAT ALLOWS YOU TO DO WHAT YOU DID?



YOU MEAN TAKE YOU FROM THE ALLEY TO YOUR APARTMENT?*

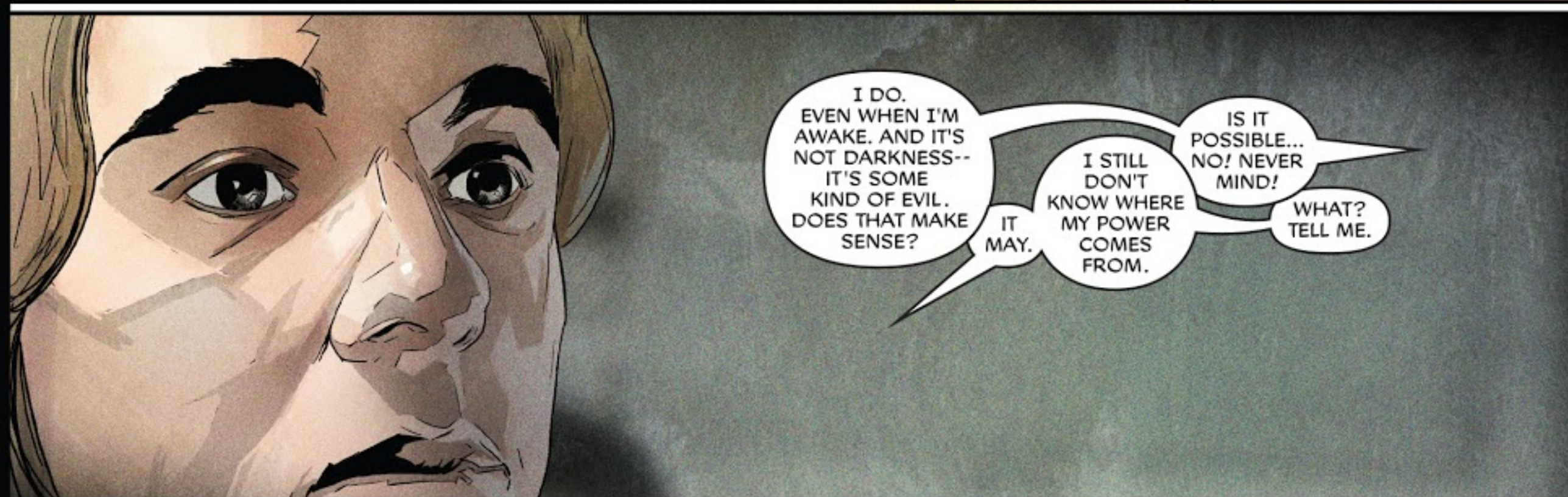
YOU TRANSPORTED US! THAT SHOULD BE SOMETHING WONDERFUL. I MEAN TO BE ABLE TO 'TIME TRAVEL' OR WHATEVER, THAT SHOULD BE AWESOME, BUT... I... WE...

WE WENT THROUGH THE 'DARK-NESS'.

YES. AND I KNOW IT ONLY LASTED A SECOND, BUT I'VE NEVER BEEN SO SCARED IN ALL MY LIFE, AND SINCE THEN I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SLEEP. AND I KEEP THINKING I HEAR WHISPERS CALLING ME AND SHADOWS MOVING. AND IT ALL STARTED THAT NIGHT. I NEED TO KNOW WHY.

YOU STILL FEEL IT?

*Issue 204--TODD



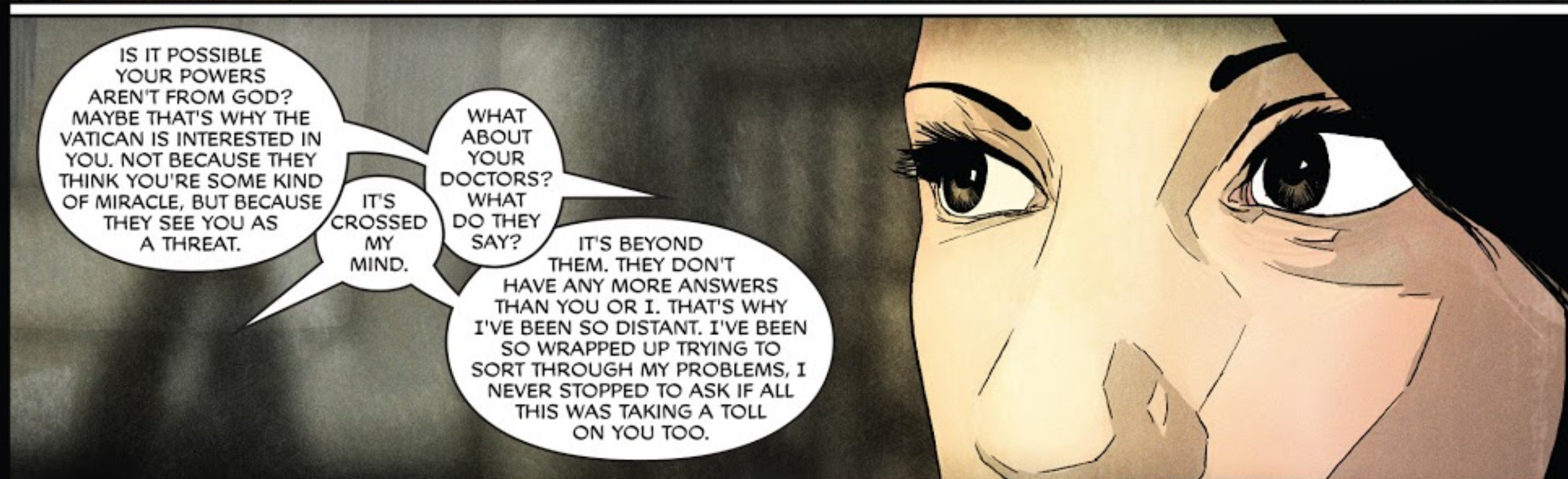
I DO. EVEN WHEN I'M AWAKE. AND IT'S NOT DARKNESS-- IT'S SOME KIND OF EVIL. DOES THAT MAKE SENSE?

IT MAY.

I STILL DON'T KNOW WHERE MY POWER COMES FROM.

IS IT POSSIBLE... NO! NEVER MIND!

WHAT? TELL ME.

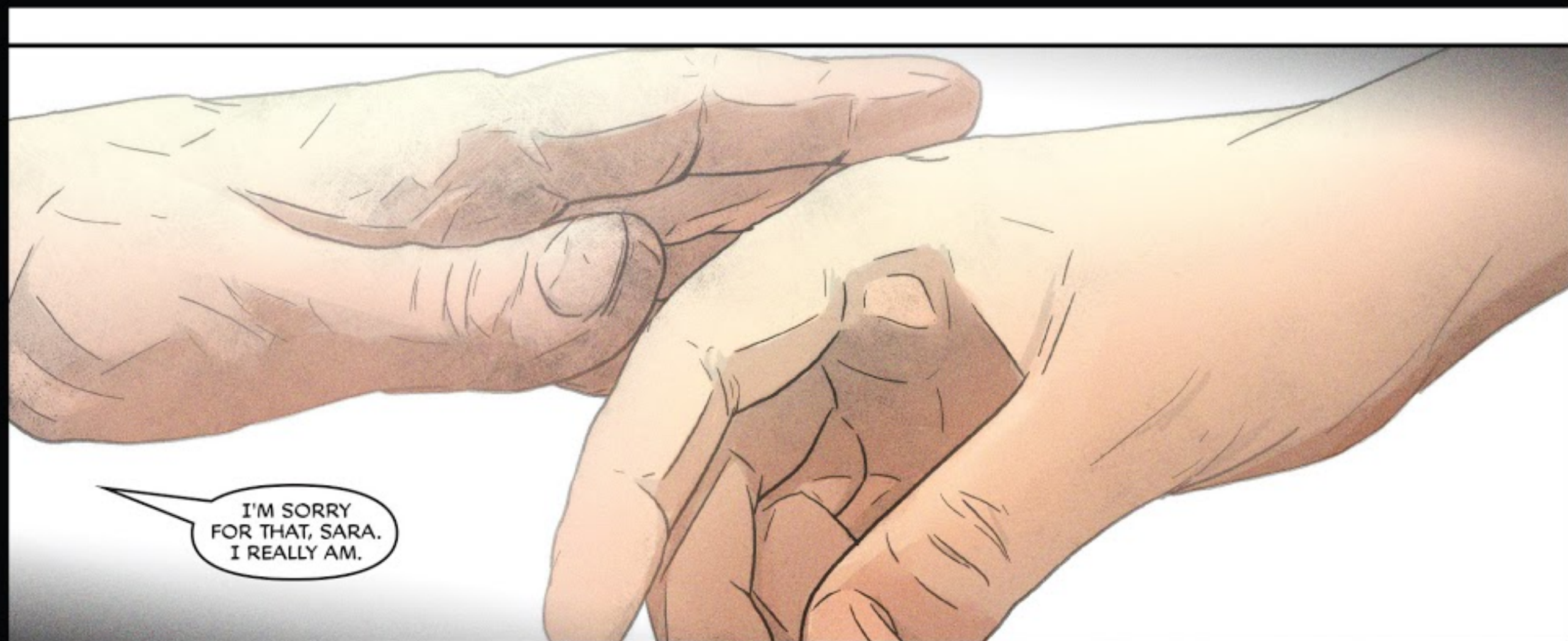


IS IT POSSIBLE YOUR POWERS AREN'T FROM GOD? MAYBE THAT'S WHY THE VATICAN IS INTERESTED IN YOU. NOT BECAUSE THEY THINK YOU'RE SOME KIND OF MIRACLE, BUT BECAUSE THEY SEE YOU AS A THREAT.

IT'S CROSSED MY MIND.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR DOCTORS? WHAT DO THEY SAY?

IT'S BEYOND THEM. THEY DON'T HAVE ANY MORE ANSWERS THAN YOU OR I. THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN SO DISTANT. I'VE BEEN SO WRAPPED UP TRYING TO SORT THROUGH MY PROBLEMS, I NEVER STOPPED TO ASK IF ALL THIS WAS TAKING A TOLL ON YOU TOO.



GASP!

MY GOD!

SARA?!
WHAT IS IT?



NOTHING!
I'M... BEING
PUNISHED. GOD'S
PUNISHING ME.

I THINK...
I HAVE TO
GO! NOW!

SARA--
PLEASE.

I CAN'T
TAKE *THIS*
ANY-
MORE!

SARA.

SARA.

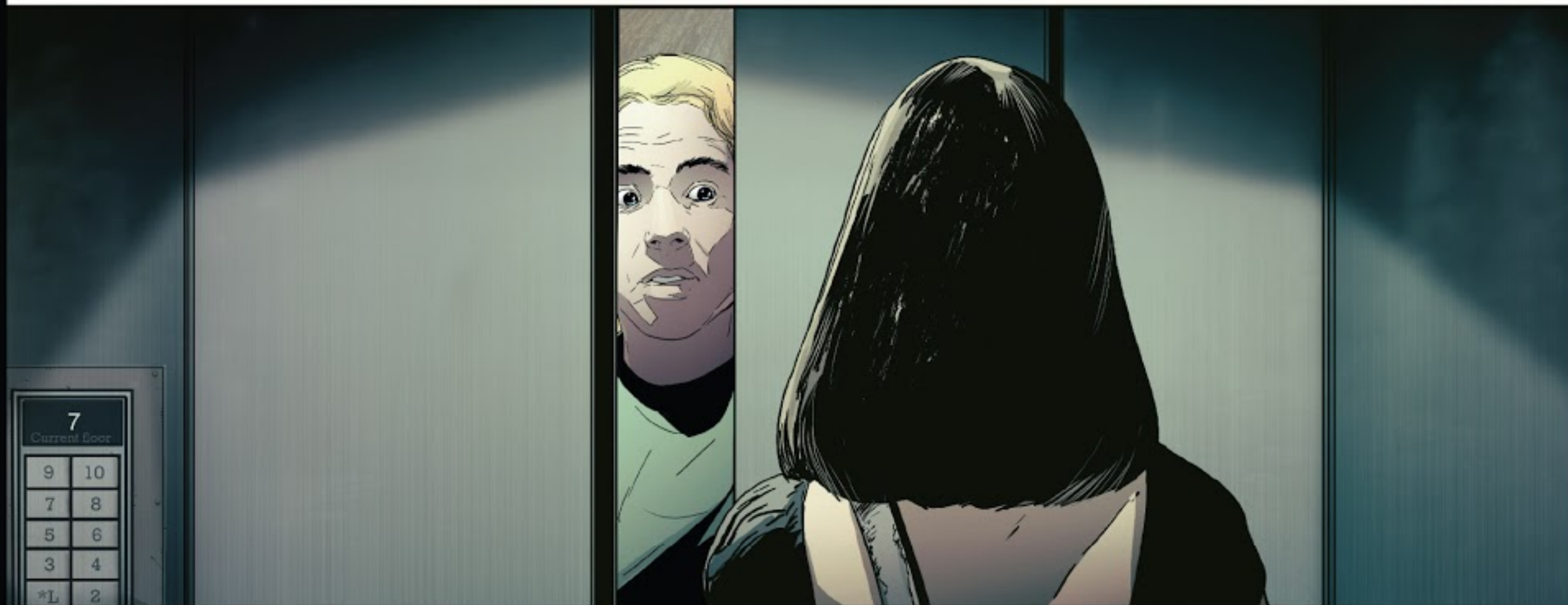
OH,
SARAAAAA...

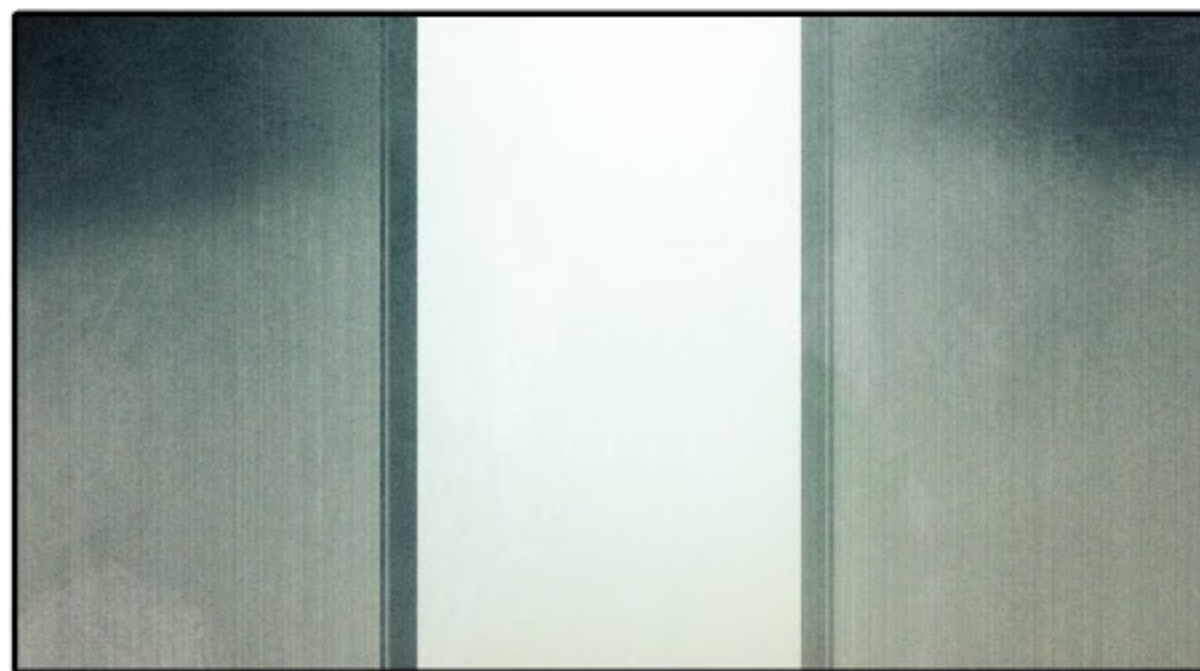
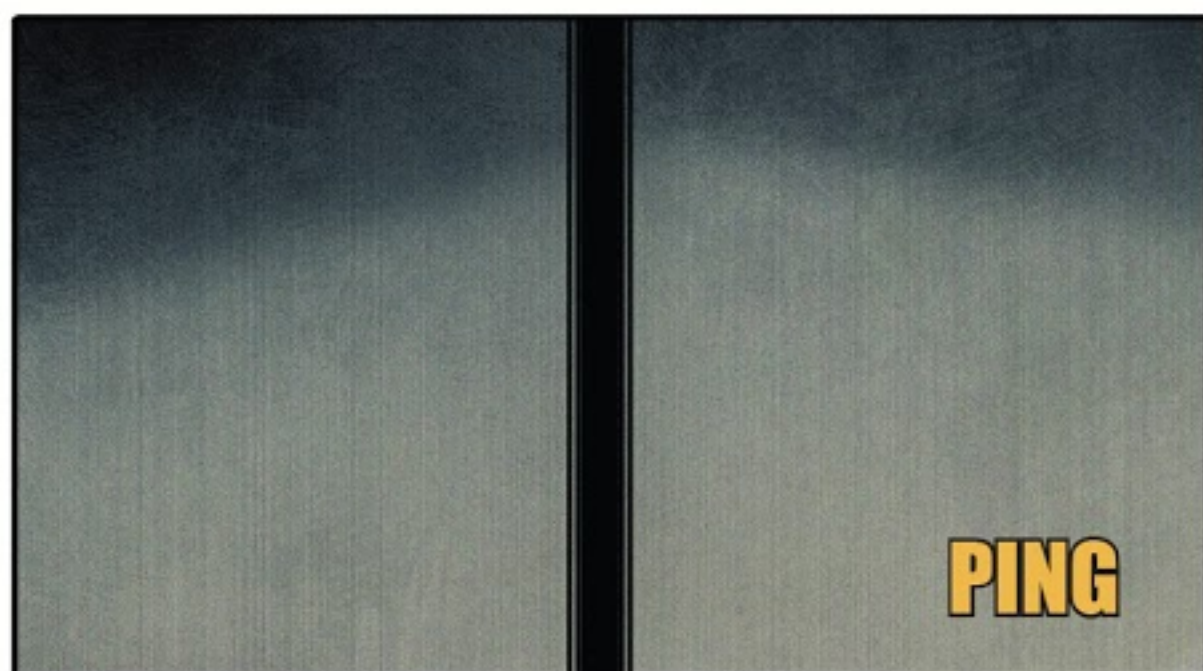
**STOP
IT!**

WHY
CAN'T
YOU JUST...
**LEAVE ME
ALONE!!**









TO BE CONTINUED...





SPAWN®

image

243

DIGITAL EDITION

KUDRANSKI
McFARLANE
+fco



tek tek tek



C'MON.
PICK
UP.

EXIT

MARC...
YOU HEARD
FROM SARA
TODAY?

HAVE
YOU BEEN
TRYING?

NOPE.

NOPE.

WELL I HAVE--
AND SHE HASN'T
BEEN ANSWERING.
SHE WAS SUPPOSED
TO CALL ME YESTER-
DAY, BUT SHE'S LEFT
NO MESSAGES AND
SHE'S NOT PICKING
UP. THOUGHT YOU
MIGHT HAVE HEARD
FROM HER. SHE
WAS PRETTY
UPSET WHEN
SHE LEFT.*

THERE'S A
SURPRISE.

WHAT?
YOU'RE NOT
STILL ANGRY
OVER THE *OTHER*
NIGHT? I TOLD
YOU I WAS
SORRY. SO QUIT
WITH THE SILENT
TREATMENT
ALREADY.

AND
STOP MAKING
THAT SILLY FACE.
I GET THAT YOU'RE
MAD AT ME. WHAT
MORE DO YOU
WANT ME TO
SAY?

NOTHING.
YOU DO YOUR
JOB. I'LL DO
MINE.

ALRIGHT,
GENTLEMEN, I'LL
NEED MR. DOWNING
OUT ON STAGE IN
ABOUT TWO
MINUTES.



LOOK, MARC,
I GET IT. YOU THINK
I WAS BEING ROUGH
ON SUSAN AND I
PROBABLY WAS, BUT I
JUST WASN'T IN THE
MOOD FOR WHATEVER
IT WAS YOU GUYS
WERE TRYING
TO DO.

WE WERE TRYING
TO HELP YOU, JIM.
DON'T YOU GET THAT? ALL
OF US ARE BUSTING OUR BALLS
AROUND HERE SO YOU CAN
DO WHAT YOU NEED TO, TO
MAKE THE FOUNDATION WORK.
BUT WHEN YOU DISAPPEAR
OR AVOID US-- IT MAKES
ALL OF OUR JOBS
DIFFICULT.

SO, YOU TELL
ME-- HOW SHOULD I
BE FEELING? YOU INSULT
MY GIRLFRIEND, YOU DON'T
LET ME IN ON WHATEVER
SECRETS YOU'RE CHASING
AND, WHETHER YOU WANT
TO ADMIT IT OR NOT,
YOU'RE PUTTING US ALL
IN DANGER.

WHAT'RE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?

JESUS CHRIST!
WAKE UP! SOMEONE
TRIED TO SHOOT YOU...
REMEMBER? PLUS THE MEDIA'S
ALWAYS HOUNDING YOU AND
THE GOVERNMENT'S ON YOUR
CASE. THAT PUTS WHOEVER'S
NEAR YOU IN THE LINE
OF FIRE TOO!

THE
GOVERN-
MENT?

WHAT? YOU
THOUGHT THEY WERE
JUST GOING TO LET SOME
UNIDENTIFIED STRANGER,
WHO SEEMS IMPERVIOUS TO
BULLETS AND HEALS DYING
PEOPLE, JUST WALTZ
AROUND DOING WHAT-
EVER HE WANTED?

SURELY
YOU' RE
NOT THAT
STUPID?

LOOK,
MARC, I'LL
TAKE CARE OF
THINGS. I
PROMISE.

ARE YOU
KIDDING ME?
HOW THE HELL
CAN YOU FIX THINGS
WHEN YOU HAVEN'T
A CLUE WHO'S
WATCHING YOU?!
OR WHY?

SO BESIDES
YOUR ODD BEHAVIOR,
I HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE
FEDS ASKING QUESTIONS
AND... MAKE IT APPEAR TO
YOUR ADORING PUBLIC THAT
EVERYTHING'S NORMAL
IN YOUR LIFE.

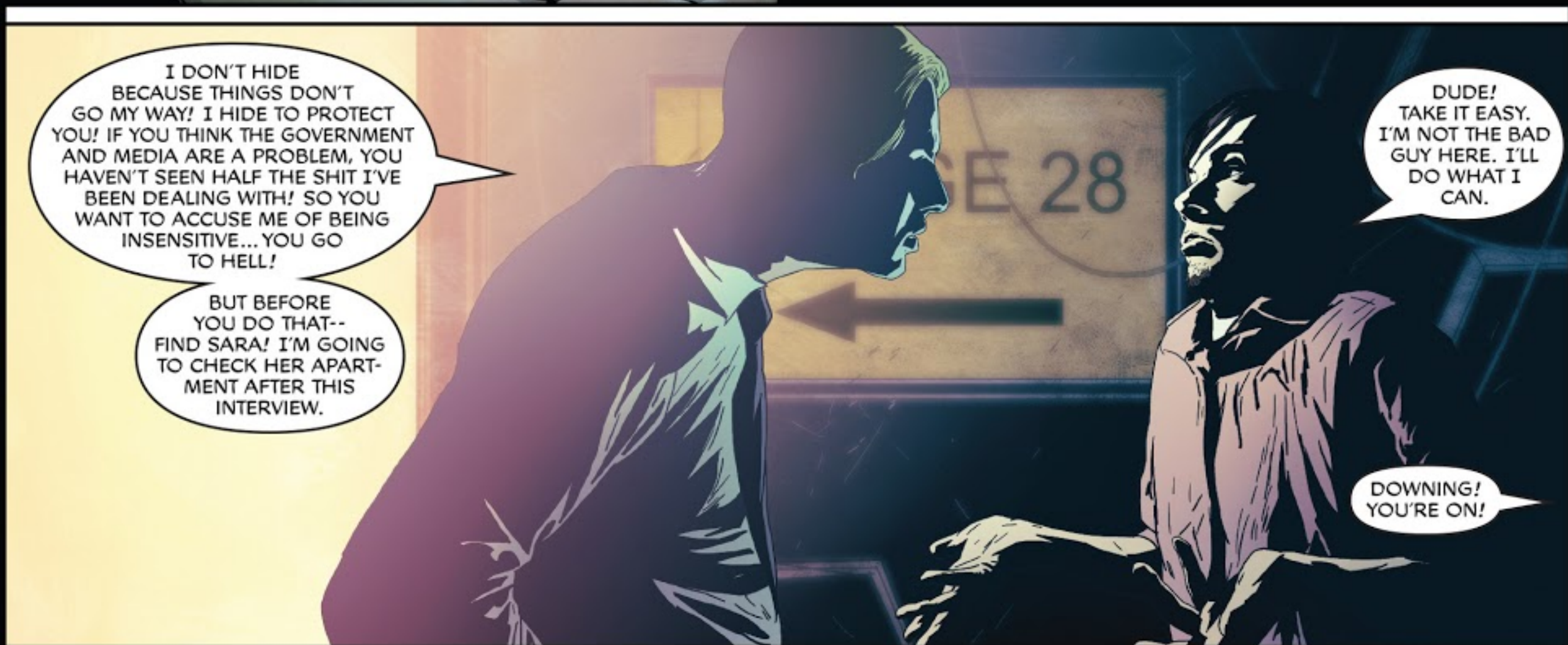
OTHER
THAN YOUR
SUPER POWERS
AND YOUR
DISAPPEARING
ACTS!



SO, I'LL TRY AND RUN DOWN SARA FOR YOU. BUT EVEN IF I DO FIND HER, I CAN'T GUARANTEE SHE'LL EVEN WANT TO TALK TO YOU.

I DON'T CARE IF SHE TALKS. I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHERE SHE IS. THAT SHE'S SAFE.

I'M SURE, BUT SHE'S A LOT LIKE YOU-- WANTS TO HIDE AWAY WHEN THINGS AREN'T GOING HER WAY.

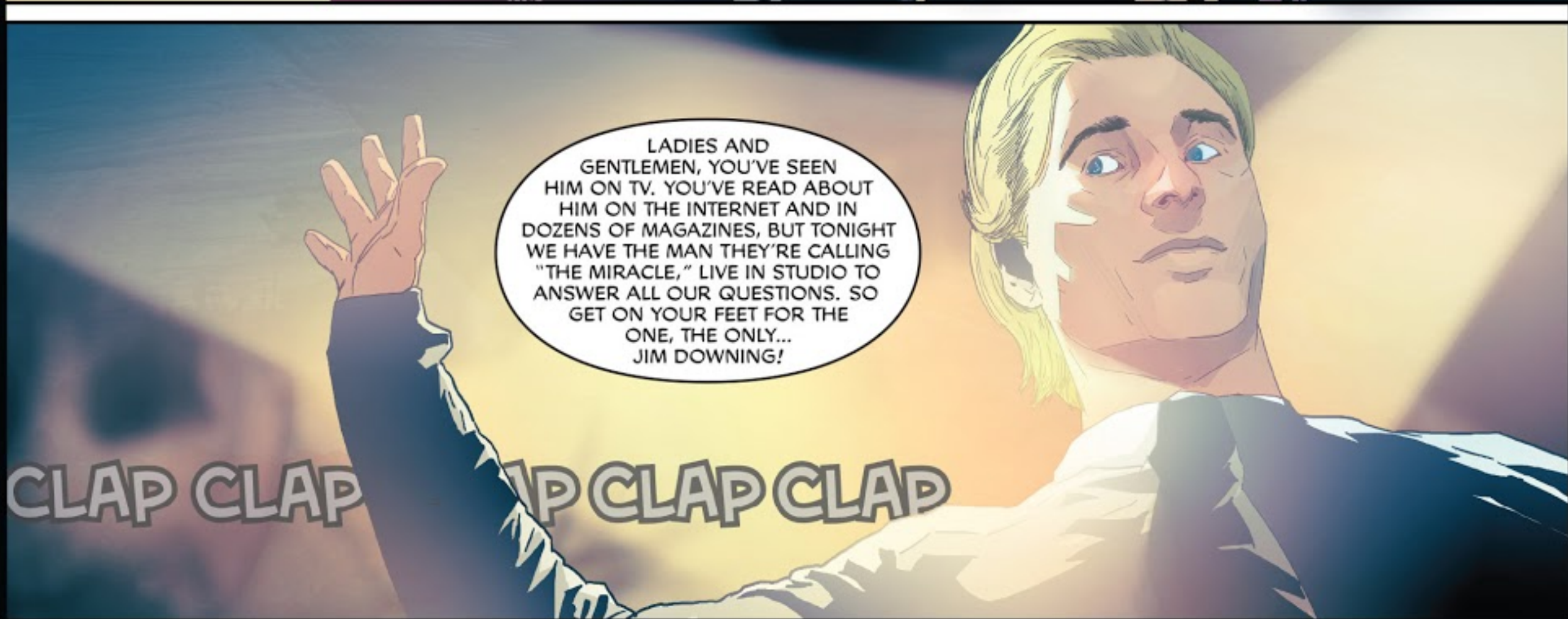


I DON'T HIDE BECAUSE THINGS DON'T GO MY WAY! I HIDE TO PROTECT YOU! IF YOU THINK THE GOVERNMENT AND MEDIA ARE A PROBLEM, YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HALF THE SHIT I'VE BEEN DEALING WITH! SO YOU WANT TO ACCUSE ME OF BEING INSENSITIVE... YOU GO TO HELL!

BUT BEFORE YOU DO THAT-- FIND SARA! I'M GOING TO CHECK HER APARTMENT AFTER THIS INTERVIEW.

DUDE! TAKE IT EASY. I'M NOT THE BAD GUY HERE. I'LL DO WHAT I CAN.

DOWNING! YOU'RE ON!



LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, YOU'VE SEEN HIM ON TV. YOU'VE READ ABOUT HIM ON THE INTERNET AND IN DOZENS OF MAGAZINES, BUT TONIGHT WE HAVE THE MAN THEY'RE CALLING "THE MIRACLE," LIVE IN STUDIO TO ANSWER ALL OUR QUESTIONS. SO GET ON YOUR FEET FOR THE ONE, THE ONLY... JIM DOWNING!

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP



HEY, LOU. I WANTED TO ASK YOU A QUESTION ABOUT THE OTHER NIGHT. YOU WORKED TUESDAY, RIGHT?

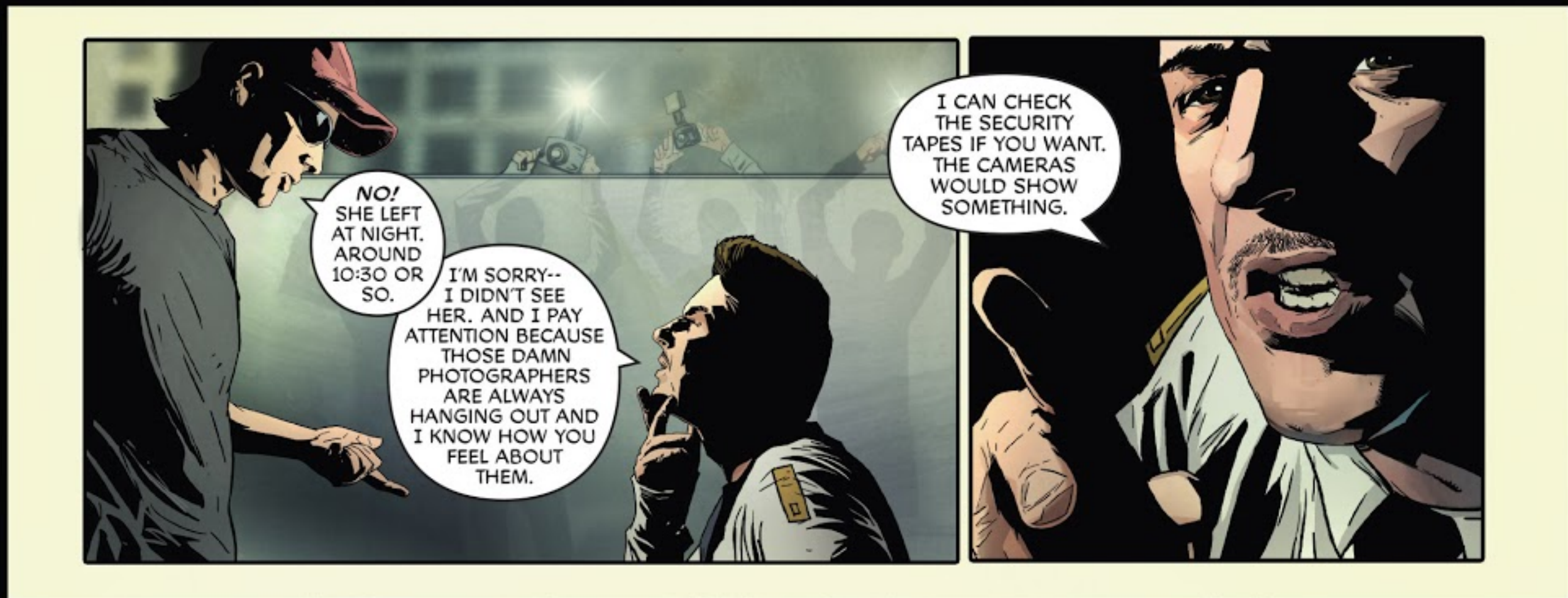
UNTIL ABOUT THREE IN THE MORNING.

I WANTED TO KNOW WHAT KIND OF MOOD SARA WAS IN WHEN SHE LEFT.

YOU MEAN AFTER SHE CAME TO VISIT YOU?

YEAH.

I NEVER SAW HER. I JUST ASSUMED SHE SPENT THE NIGHT WITH YOU, SIR. MAYBE THE MORNING SHIFT SAW...

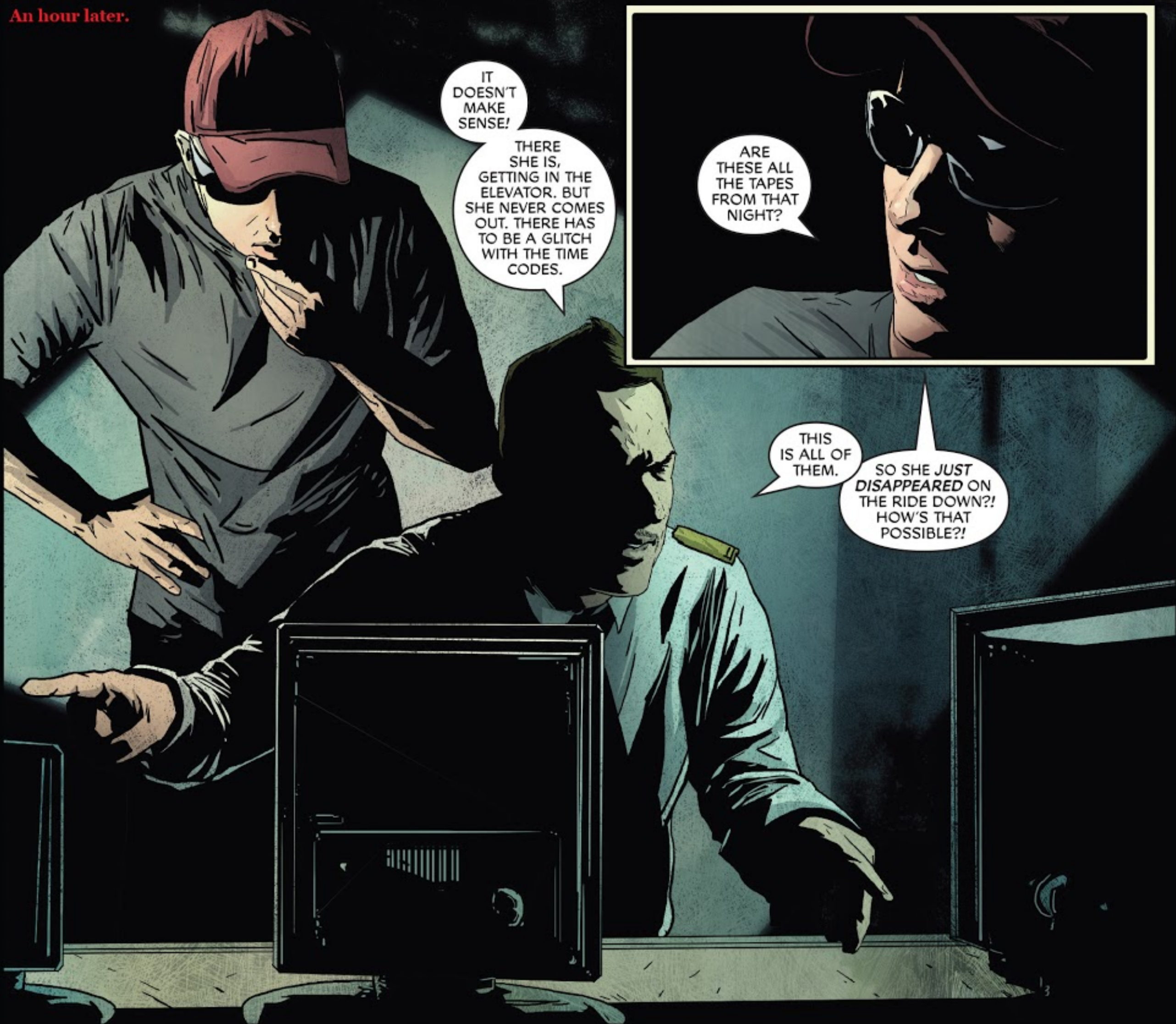


NO! SHE LEFT AT NIGHT. AROUND 10:30 OR SO.

I'M SORRY-- I DIDN'T SEE HER. AND I PAY ATTENTION BECAUSE THOSE DAMN PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE ALWAYS HANGING OUT AND I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THEM.

I CAN CHECK THE SECURITY TAPES IF YOU WANT. THE CAMERAS WOULD SHOW SOMETHING.

An hour later.



IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE!

THERE SHE IS, GETTING IN THE ELEVATOR. BUT SHE NEVER COMES OUT. THERE HAS TO BE A GLITCH WITH THE TIME CODES.

ARE THESE ALL THE TAPES FROM THAT NIGHT?

THIS IS ALL OF THEM.

SO SHE JUST DISAPPEARED ON THE RIDE DOWN?! HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE?!



I'M GLAD YOU'RE STARTING TO FEEL BETTER. THE DOCTORS SAY YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO RETURN TO WORK SOON.

EVERYONE'S MISSING YOU.

EVERYONE? EVEN THAT PECKERHEAD, ZARRINO?



WELL, NOT HIM... BUT MOST EVERYONE ELSE.

YOU'D BE SURPRISED AT HOW COPS CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER WHEN ONE OF THEM NEARLY DIES.

GOOD. I PLAN ON MILKING THAT FOR A WHILE.

IN THE MEANTIME-- HOW'S YOUR WORKLOAD GOING? MAKING ANY PROGRESS WITH IT? I HEARD YOU'RE STILL KNEE DEEP IN YOUR DOWNING INVESTIGATION.



I AM. BEFORE WE GET INTO THAT, THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.

SOUNDS SERIOUS.



IT IS.

THE REASON YOU WERE IN THE HOSPITAL-- YOUR HEART ATTACK-- WAS BECAUSE OF ME.



AND NOW THAT YOU'RE HEALTHY, YOU DESERVE TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU.



I'M SORRY, SAM.
NONE OF THIS SHOULD
HAVE HAPPENED. I SHOULDN'T
HAVE AGGRAVATED CLOWN LIKE
THAT.* WE KNOW WHAT THEY'RE
CAPABLE OF DOING. WE'VE
SEEN IT DOZENS OF TIMES
ALREADY, BUT..

BUT THEY'VE
GENERALLY KEPT THEIR
FIGHTING AMONGST
THEMSELVES. SPAWN.
CLOWN. AND ALL THE REST
OF THOSE
DEMON SHITS!

GUESS
WE'VE BEEN
LUCKY THEY'VE
LEFT US ALONE
FOR THIS
LONG.

HE COULD
HAVE KILLED YOU, SAM.
THAT'S WHAT SCARES ME.
WE'RE COMPLETELY OUT OF
OUR LEAGUE HERE. WITHOUT
AL, I DON'T KNOW IF THERE'S
ANYONE WE CAN
TRUST.

*Issue 199 -- Todd

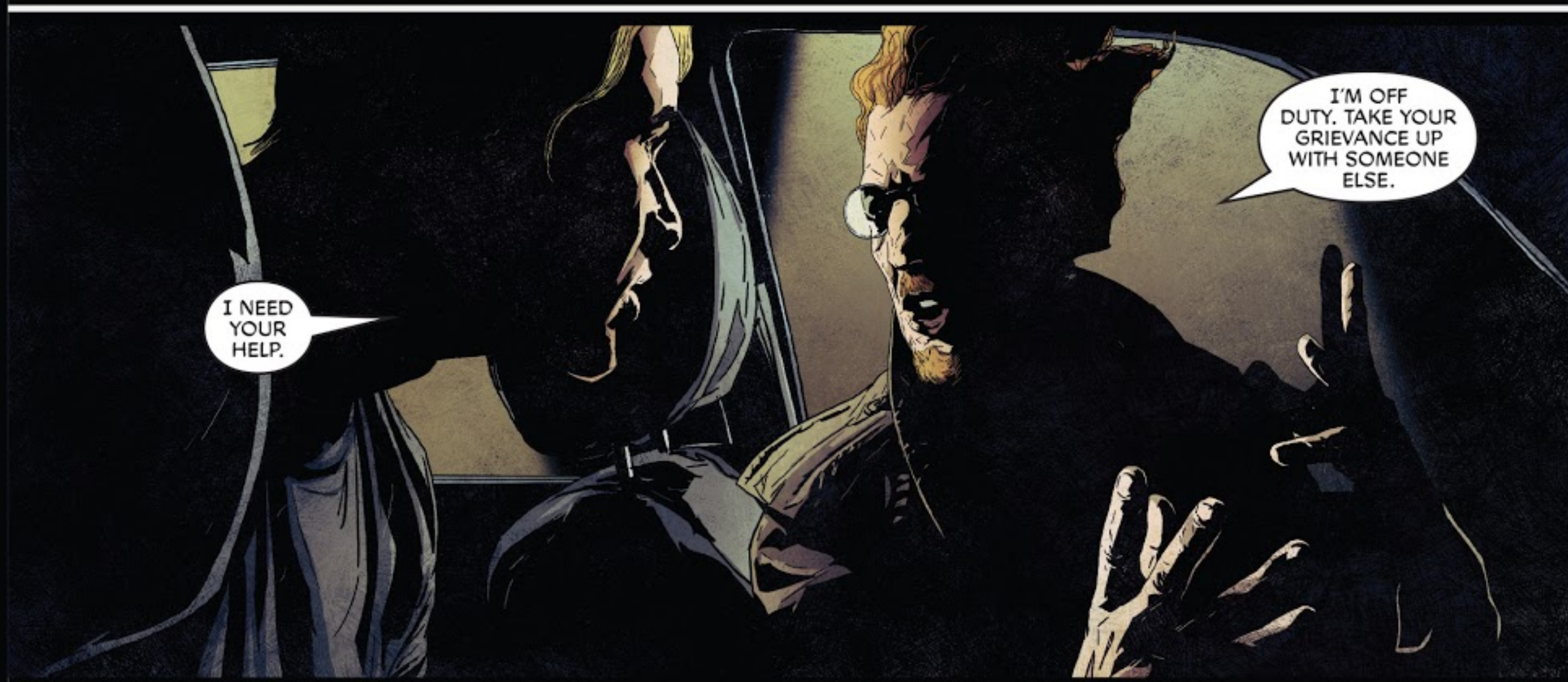


I THOUGHT
YOU SAID
DOWNING
TRIED TO HELP
ME.

HE DID.
BUT I WAS USING
HIM FOR WHAT HIS
POWERS CAN DO-- NOT
BECAUSE I TRUST HIM.
MAYBE IN TIME. NOT
NOW, THOUGH.

SO WE'RE ON
OUR OWN. WOULDN'T
BE THE FIRST TIME. AND
JUST SO YOU KNOW-- YOU
DID NOTHING WRONG. IN
FACT, I'M KINDA PROUD YOU
STOOD UP FOR ME AGAINST
CLOWN AND PROTECTED
ME AT THE HOSPITAL.
YOUR BEING THERE
DID MATTER.





I NEED
YOUR
HELP.

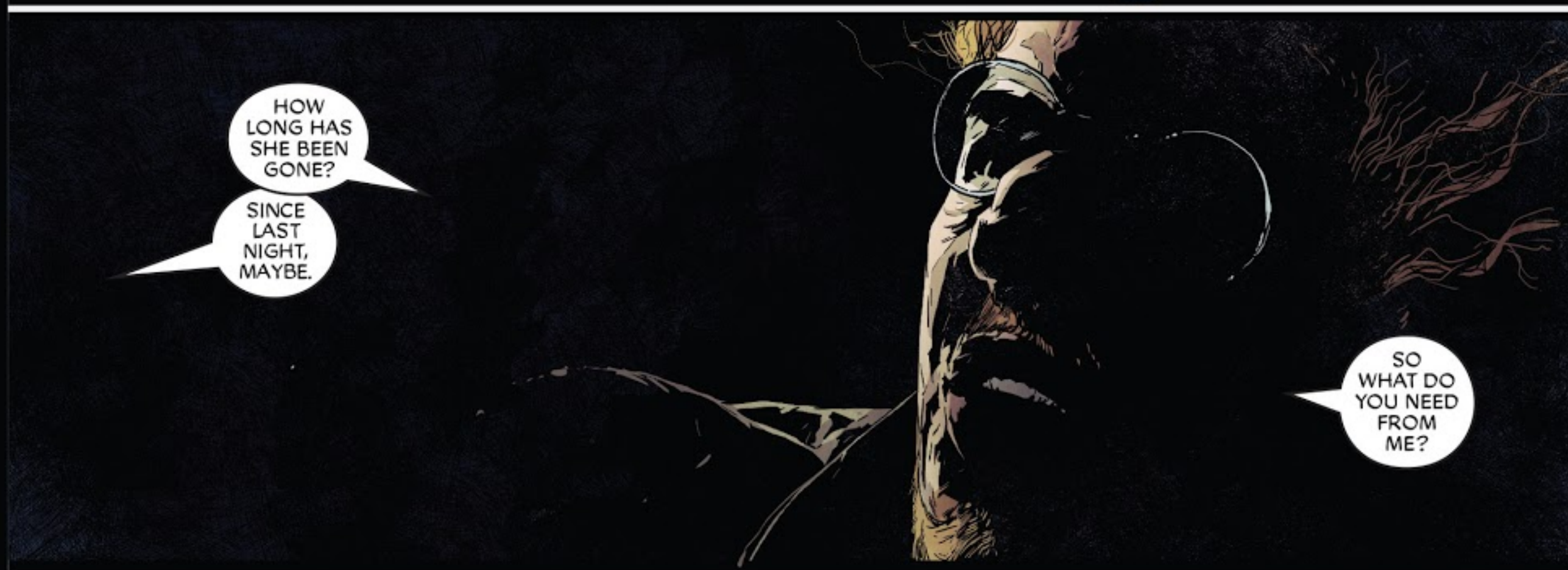
I'M OFF
DUTY. TAKE YOUR
GRIEVANCE UP
WITH SOMEONE
ELSE.



LOOK... YOU
WANT TO BE MAD AT
ME, TWITCH, GO AHEAD! BUT
YOU CAME TO ME FIRST! NOT THE
OTHER WAY AROUND! I TRIED HELPING
SAM WHEN YOU WANTED, NOW I
WANT YOU TO RETURN THE FAVOR.
SARA'S MISSING. DISAPPEARED.
NO ONE KNOWS WHERE
SHE IS.

YOU TRAVEL
IN THE SHADOWS.
WHY DON'T YOU
JUST CHECK HER
APARTMENT?

I DID. IT
DOESN'T
LOOK LIKE
SHE'S BEEN
THERE.



HOW
LONG HAS
SHE BEEN
GONE?

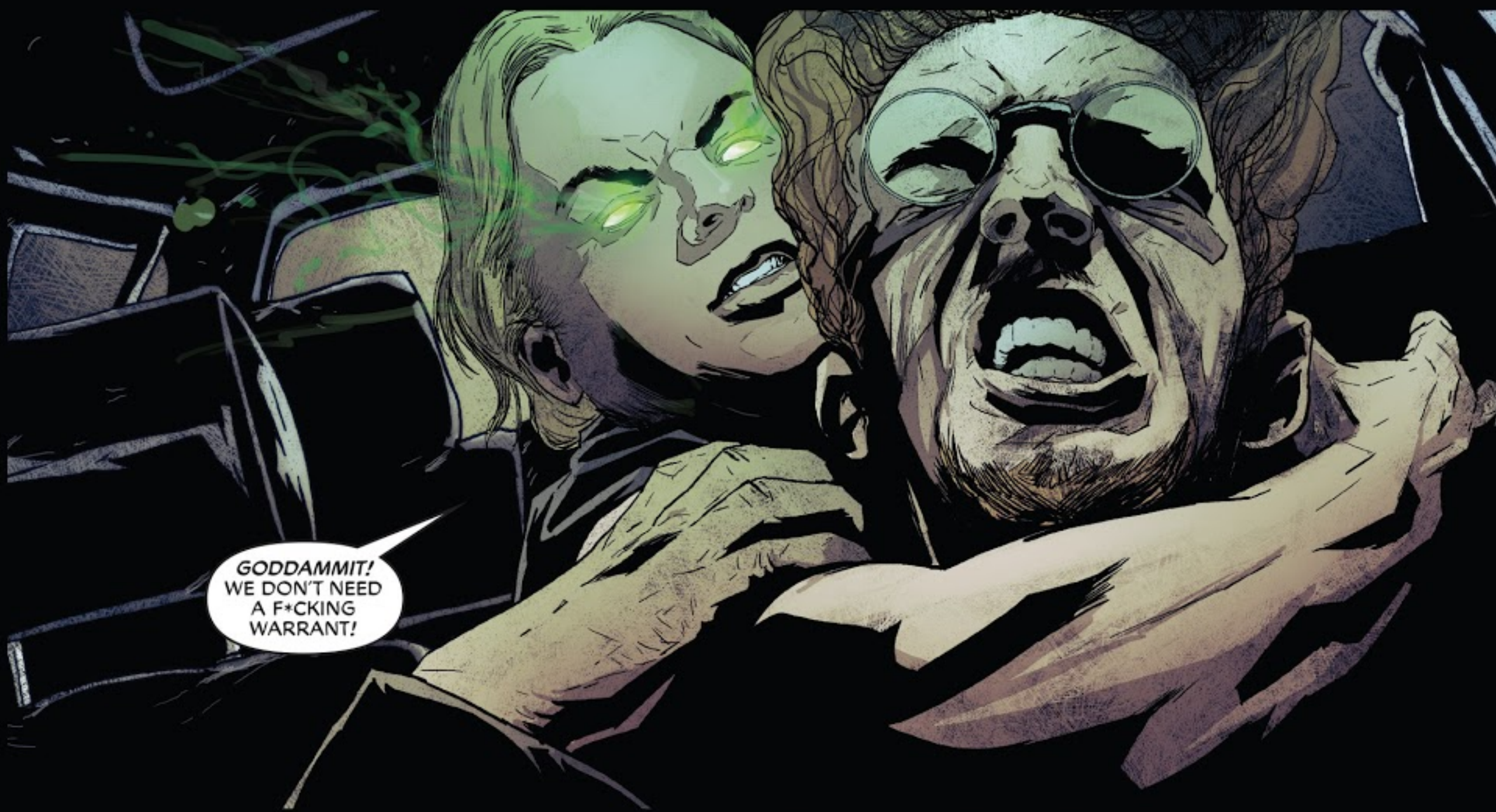
SINCE
LAST
NIGHT,
MAYBE.

SO
WHAT DO
YOU NEED
FROM
ME?



I'M NOT
A DETECTIVE. I
DON'T KNOW WHAT
CLUES TO LOOK
FOR-- THAT'S YOUR
SKILL. I WANT TO
MAKE SURE I'M NOT
MISSING
SOMETHING.

IF IT HASN'T
BEEN A FULL 48
HOURS, WE CAN'T
DO ANYTHING. IT'S
NOT A MISSING
PERSONS CASE YET.
A WARRANT
WOULD TAKE TOO
LONG TO...





THIS IS
HER PLACE. TAKE
A LOOK AROUND AND
TELL ME HOW LONG IT'S
BEEN SINCE SHE'S BEEN
HERE. OR IF ANYTHING
STRIKES YOU
AS ODD.

YOU'RE...
THIS ISN'T
HOW I DO
THINGS.



WHY ARE YOU
FIGHTING ME? BECAUSE
I MET YOUR DEAD SON?
I DON'T KNOW HOW THAT
HAPPENED. I JUST WANT TO
MAKE SURE SARA'S SAFE.
JUST LIKE YOU WANT
SAM SAFE.

WHAT'RE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?

I HEARD
WHAT YOU SAID
TO HIM. I WAS IN
THE ROOM THE
WHOLE TIME.



YOU
WHAT?

YOU INVADE
PEOPLE'S LIVES WHEN-
EVER YOU WANT? FORCE
THEM AGAINST THEIR WILLS
TO HELP?! THAT'S WHAT
YOU DO? THAT'S *HOW*
YOU *USE* YOUR
POWERS?

I PROTECT
MY FRIENDS. AND I'LL
DO WHATEVER IT
TAKES TO KEEP THEM
PROTECTED.

The Next Morning.

ANY FURTHER
QUESTIONS ABOUT
OUR INDONESIAN
MERGER BEFORE
WE MOVE ON?

NO?

GOOD! ALRIGHT,
THE NEXT ITEM ON OUR
AGENDA IS ABOUT OUR
ONGOING TALKS WITH THE SYRIAN
GOVERNMENT ABOUT OUR
DRILLING FACILITIES IN THE NORTH.
WE'RE TRYING TO SEE WHAT SECURITY
ASSURANCES THEY CAN GIVE US
DURING THEIR ONGOING BATTLES
WITH THEIR POPULACE.
MR. RAMUS WILL ELABORATE
FURTHER.



THANK YOU,
DONALD. AS YOU
GENTLEMEN ARE AWARE,
OUR FISCAL QUARTER WILL BE
ENDING NEXT WEEK AND THE
PRODUCTION OF THESE PETROLEUM
SITES IS ESSENTIAL TO OUR
BOTTOM LINE. HAVING CONTINUED
DISTRIBUTION OF THOSE OIL
SUPPLIES WILL FURTHER
STRENGTHEN...

SLAM

HEY!
SORRY FOR THE
INTRUSION, EVERYONE,
BUT MR. RAMUS SAID HIS
BOARD WAS MEETING TODAY
AND WAS HOPING I'D
HAVE A CHANCE TO POP
IN. HOPE I'M NOT
INTERRUPTING SOME-
THING BIG?

PLEASE,
MR. DOWNING...
COME IN.



I DIDN'T
THINK YOU'D
BE COMING
TODAY.





WHAT'S THIS ABOUT, DOWNING? I DIDN'T INVITE YOU HERE TODAY.



LET'S CUT THE CRAP! WHERE'S SARA?

WHO'S SARA?

DON'T TEST ME!



THEN WHAT DO YOU WANT?

SHE'S MISSING! I SCOURED HER APARTMENT AND SHE HASN'T BEEN THERE... AND NOTHING'S BEEN TOUCHED. SO THAT ONLY LEAVES ME WITH A COUPLE POSSIBILITIES. YOU'RE ONE OF THEM! NOW TALK!

WELL... I'M FLATTERED YOU THINK SO HIGHLY OF ME, BUT I DON'T NEED TO ABUSE YOUR HUMAN FRIENDS TO MAKE YOU DO WHAT I WANT. THOUGH, SEEING AS HOW MUCH YOU CARE FOR THIS LADY, I MAY CHANGE MY MIND IN THE FUTURE.

YOU'RE LYING!



LET'S GET SOMETHING STRAIGHT, JIM.



IF I WANTED TO SEND YOU A MESSAGE THROUGH YOUR FRIENDS, THEY'D ALL BE DEAD. ALL OF THEM! I WOULDN'T STOP WITH JUST ONE.



YOU THINK
YOU CONTROL
ME? IT'S THE
OTHER WAY
AROUND.

I SAW HOW YOU
REACTED WHEN I CRASHED
YOUR MEETING. YOU DON'T LIKE IT
WHEN YOU'RE NOT IN CHARGE. WHEN
THINGS AREN'T GOING YOUR WAY.
THAT'S GOOD BECAUSE I PLAN ON
USING THAT AGAINST YOU SOON.
IN THE MEANTIME, I'M LOOKING
FOR SARA.

AND IF I
DON'T GET A FEW
ANSWERS SOON, I'LL
MAKE SURE ALL THOSE MEN
OUT THERE SUFFER-- AND I'LL
MAKE SURE THEY THINK YOU
SENT ME. THAT WOULDN'T
BE GOOD FOR YOUR
BUSINESS, NOW
WOULD IT?



TRY
CLOWN.

HE'S MY
NEXT STOP.
WHERE DOES
HE GO AT
NIGHT?



THAT'S
ALWAYS BEEN A
MYSTERY. BUT HE DOES
POP OUT OF HIS HOLE
FROM TIME TO TIME.
THERE'S AN INSANE
ASYLUM HE LIKES TO
FREQUENT.

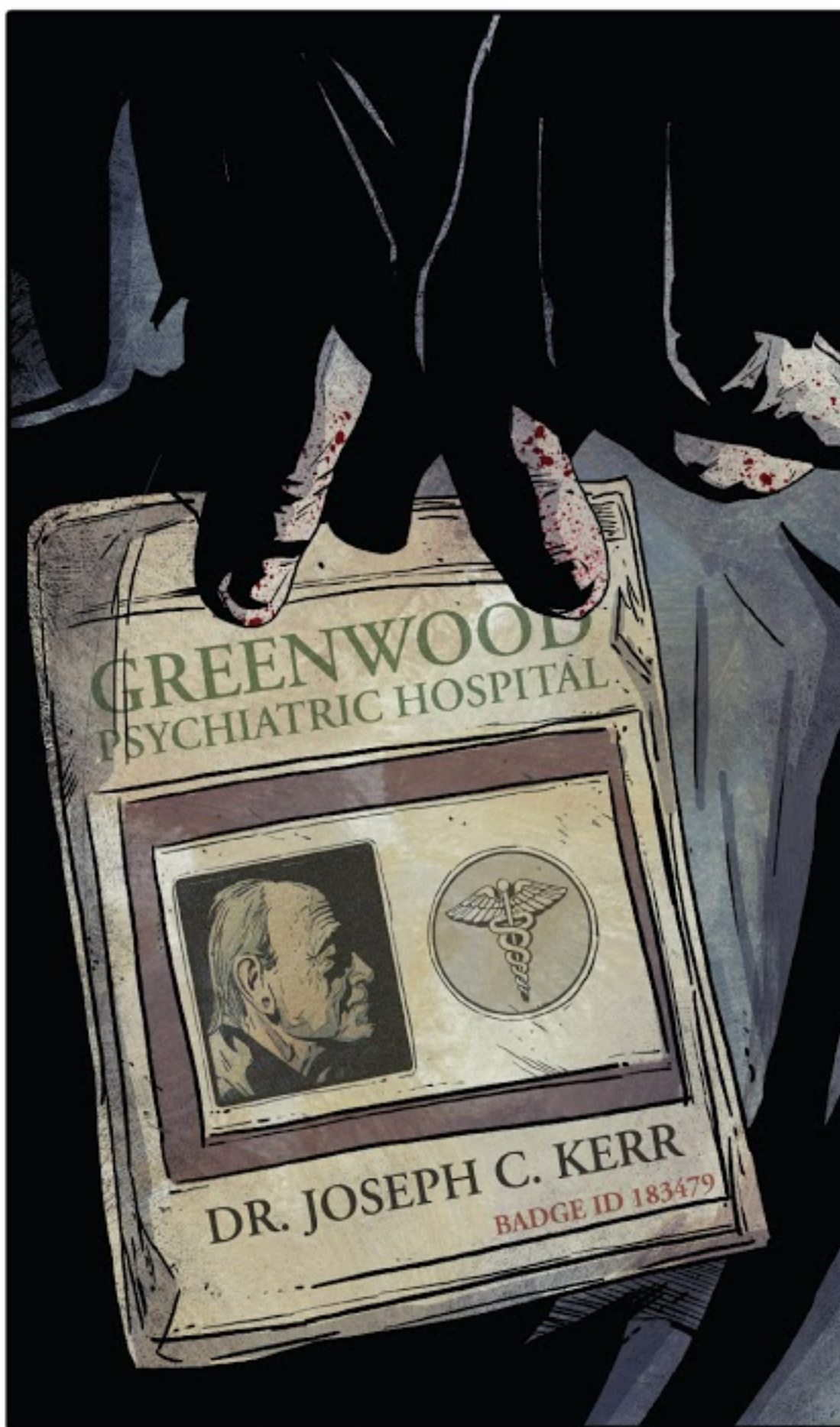


SO HE
HANGS OUT
WITH THE OTHER
CRAZIES IN
THEIR PADDED
CELLS?

NOT
QUITE.
HE'S A
DOCTOR
THERE.

DOES
THIS PLACE
HAVE A
NAME?

Northern Connecticut.



Six Hours Later.





TELL ME!
**WHERE IS
SHE?!**

HOW...?

YOU'RE
NOT THE
ONLY ONE
THAT CAN
CHANGE HIS
LOOKS!



NOW...
**WHERE'S
SARA?!**

SHE'S
DEAD!

OR
MAYBE
NOT.

I'M NOT
TELLING.

KNOW
WHY?

BECAUSE
YOU NEVER
HAD THE POWER
TO STOP ANY-
THING I
WANTED TO
DO.

EVER!

I DON'T
NEED POWER TO
BEAT YOU. I JUST
NEED YOU... TO
NOT
HAVE
POWERS!

SO, I'VE
GOT SOME-
THING FOR
YOU!



AND
GUESS
WHERE IT
CAME
FROM?

THE
'DEAD
ZONE'!

MEANING
THIS DIRT
NEUTRALIZES ANY-
THING IT TOUCHES.
TURNS THINGS
HUMAN...

EVEN
YOU!

YOU'VE
GONE
MAD!!

OH,
I'M MAD ALL
RIGHT! IN FACT
I'M PISSED
OFF!

slit

slit

YEA A A A A A A A A A A A

SO UNLESS
YOU WANT ME TO
COMPLETELY CARVE
YOUR FACE OFF--
YOU'LL TELL ME WHAT
HAPPENED TO
SARA!

IF NOT--
I'LL KILL
YOU RIGHT
HERE!

OKAY.



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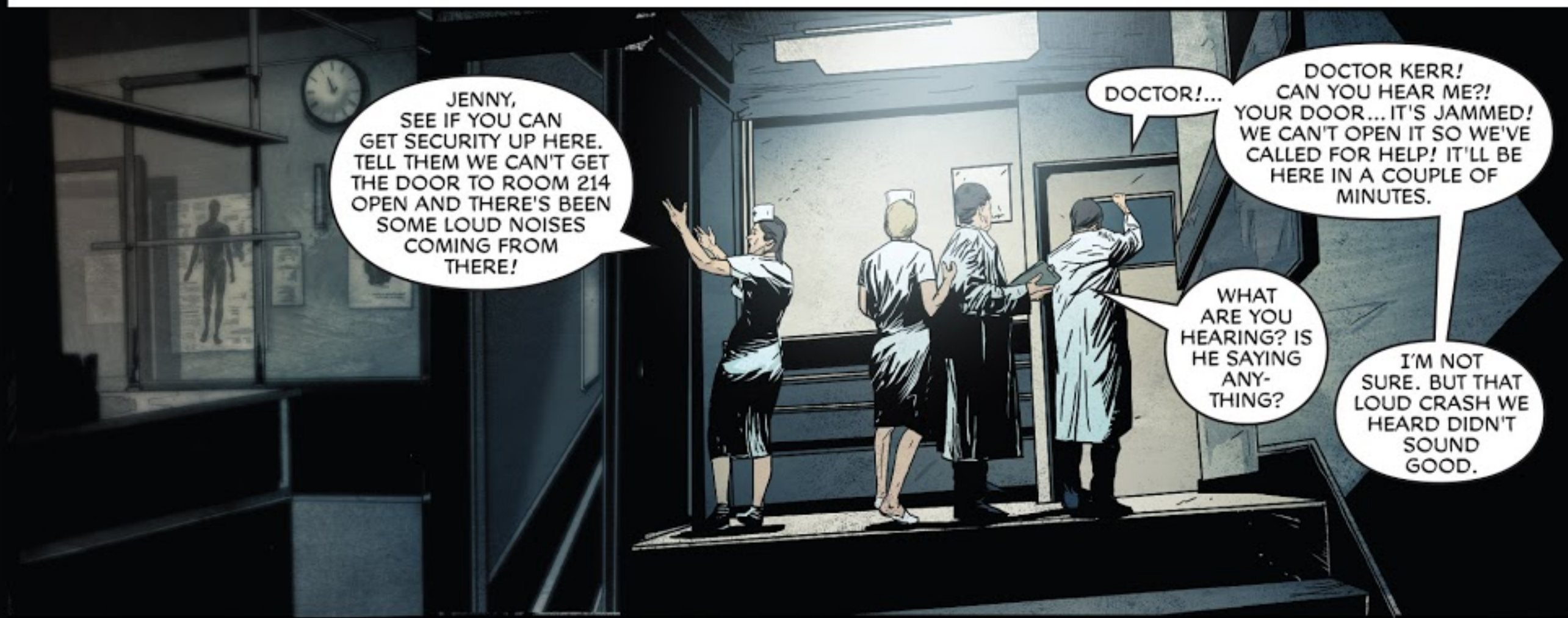
SPAWN®

SYMON
KUDRANSKI
-45-

McFARIANE

+fco





JENNY,
SEE IF YOU CAN
GET SECURITY UP HERE.
TELL THEM WE CAN'T GET
THE DOOR TO ROOM 214
OPEN AND THERE'S BEEN
SOME LOUD NOISES
COMING FROM
THERE!

DOCTOR!...

DOCTOR KERR!
CAN YOU HEAR ME?!
YOUR DOOR... IT'S JAMMED!
WE CAN'T OPEN IT SO WE'VE
CALLED FOR HELP! IT'LL BE
HERE IN A COUPLE OF
MINUTES.

WHAT
ARE YOU
HEARING? IS
HE SAYING
ANY-
THING?

I'M NOT
SURE. BUT THAT
LOUD CRASH WE
HEARD DIDN'T
SOUND
GOOD.



YOU'VE
GOT FIVE
SECONDS!

OKAY!...
OKAY.

I SAID
I'D TELL
YOU!

THREE
SECONDS.



THE
'BLACK.'
I TOOK HER
INTO THE
'BLACK.'

I DON'T KNOW
WHAT THAT IS AND I
DON'T CARE! WE'RE
GOING THERE AND WE'RE
BRINGING SARA BACK.
UNHARMED!

I CAN'T...

NOT IN MY
CONDITION! I NEED
MY POWERS TO GET
THERE, BUT YOU TOOK
THOSE FROM ME!*
SO I COULDN'T GO
THERE EVEN IF I
WANTED!

THEN
WHERE IS IT?
THE 'BLACK'--
HOW DO I GET
THERE?

*Last issue -- Todd



YOU'RE
KIDDING ME,
RIGHT?

I DON'T
KID.

YOU'VE
ALREADY
BEEN
THERE...

HUNDREDS
OF TIMES! IT'S THE SPACE
BETWEEN HERE AND THE SHADOWS
YOU TRANSPORT IN. EVERY TIME
YOU'VE TELEPORTED FROM ONE PLACE
TO ANOTHER USING THE SHADOWS,
YOU WENT THERE... FOR A BRIEF
SECOND EACH TIME. YOU JUST
NEVER NOTICED!



SO, GO
AHEAD--CUT
ME ALL YOU WANT.
IT WON'T CHANGE
A DAMN THING!
YOU WANT SARA?
YOU'LL HAVE TO
GET HER...
NOT ME!

THAT'S
MY
PLAN.



NOW TELL
ME--HOW DO I
DO THAT? AND IF
YOU LIE, I'LL CARVE
YOUR FACE SO EVEN
YOU WON'T BE ABLE
TO RECOGNIZE
IT.

ARE WE
CLEAR?



WE'RE
CLEAR.

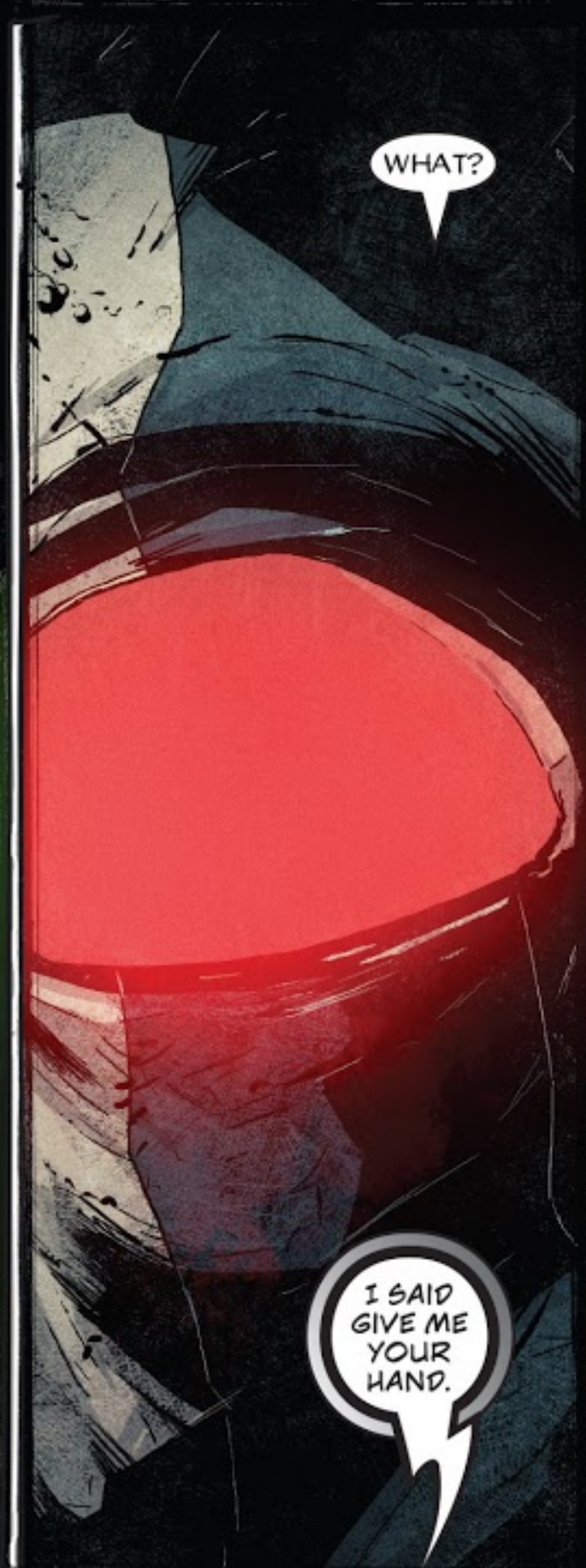
GOOD!
BECAUSE IN CASE
YOU'RE TOO THICK
TO NOTICE...YOU'RE HUMAN!
NINETY-FIVE PERCENT ANYWAY.
WHICH MEANS I CAN HURT YOU.
REAL BAD IF I WANT. SO YOU'RE
GOING TO WALK ME THROUGH
HOW I GET TO SARA AND
YOU'RE GOING TO DO IT
BEFORE SECURITY
KNOCKS DOWN
THAT DOOR.

THEN YOU'RE
GOING TO TELL ME,
WHY YOU TOOK HER FROM
THAT ELEVATOR, AND IF YOU
HURT HER. BECAUSE IF YOU
DID...I'LL MAKE SURE YOU
KNOW EVERY POSSIBLE
PAIN A HUMAN
CAN FEEL!

NOW
TALK.



Moments later.



SNAP

AAARRRRR

YOU EVER
COME
NEAR SARA
AGAIN...

YOU'RE
DEAD.

DOCTOR
KERR?! OH
MY GOD!
YOUR
FACE...!

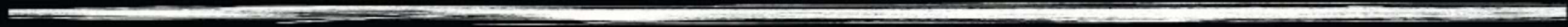
SLAM

I...
MY ARM...
I THINK... IT'S
BROKEN.

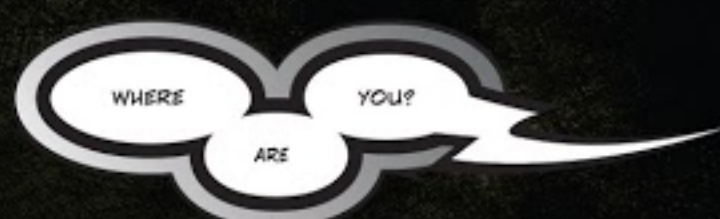
WHAT
HAPPENED?

I LOST
MY BALANCE...
HIT MY HEAD ON
THE GLASS
CABINET.

DON'T
MOVE IT, WE
NEED TO GET
YOU TO EMERGENCY
AND TAKE SOME
X-RAYS. SOMEONE
GRAB A WHEEL-
CHAIR!



Hours later.





SARA!...

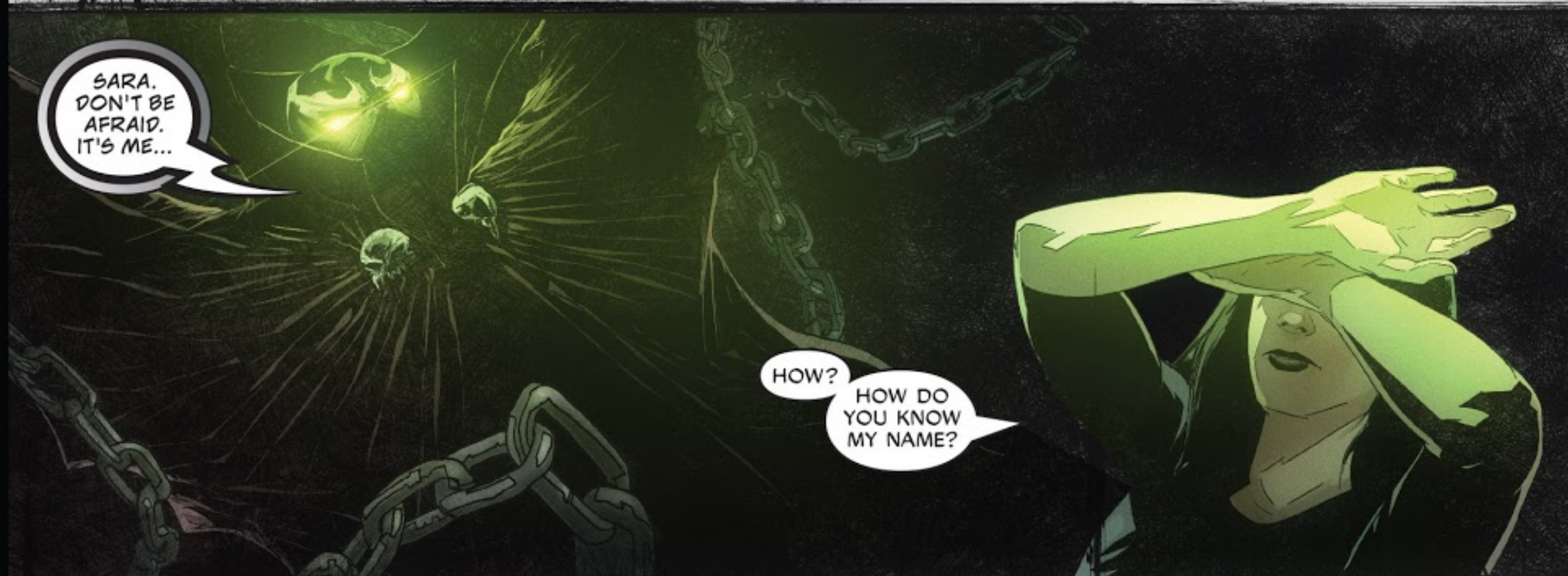
YOU'RE
ALIVE!

NO!

DON'T...
PLEASE!



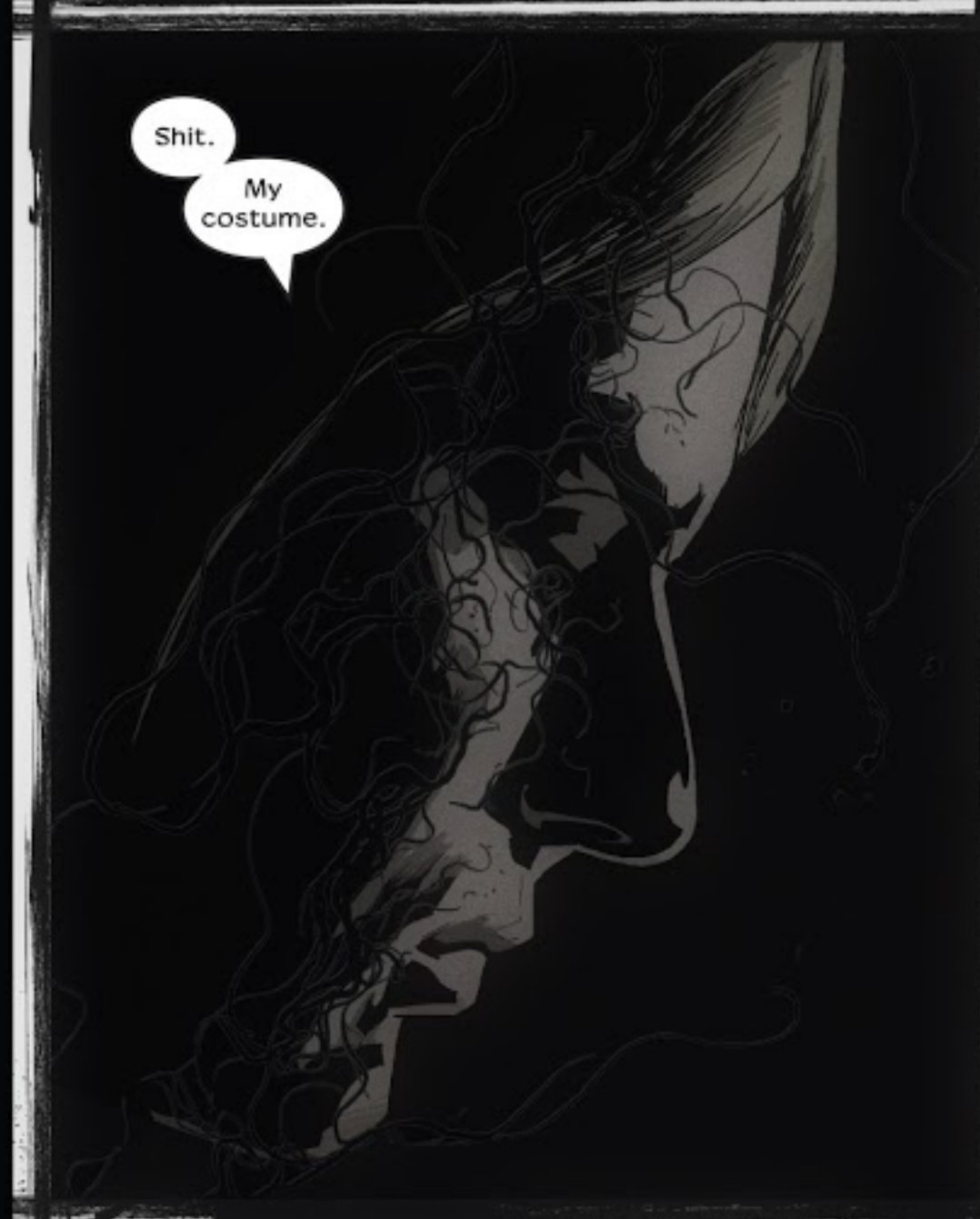
DON'T
TOUCH ME!
I'M BEGGING...
JUST...
LEAVE ME...
ALONE.



SARA.
DON'T BE
AFRAID.
IT'S ME...

HOW?

HOW DO
YOU KNOW
MY NAME?



Shit.

My
costume.



SARA,
IT'S ME,
JIM.

JIM?

YES...
I'M
HERE.





WHAT...
ARE YOU
DOING...
HERE?

I'M
TAKING YOU
HOME.
WHERE YOU'LL
BE SAFE
AGAIN.

I THOUGHT
YOU WERE...
ONE OF *THEM*.
YOU LOOKED LIKE
THEM FOR A
MOMENT.

SHHHHHH,
YOU'RE STILL IN
SHOCK. I'VE
GOT YOU.

TIRED.
I'M SO TIRED.
COULDN'T
SLEEP.

NOT WITH
ALL OF THEM STILL
OUT THERE. BUT
I KNEW YOU... WERE
DIFFERENT. BECAUSE
YOUR BRIGHT EYES
WERE SO... SO...



JIM...
NO!
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?! WE CAN'T
GO OUT THERE!
**THEY'RE
WAITING!**

YOUR
EYES! THEY
KNOW YOU'RE
HERE NOW! THEY
KNOW WE WANT
TO LEAVE!!

WHO
KNOWS?



IT'S YOUR
EYES! THEY'RE
DRAWING THEM
TO US!
DON'T YOU
GET IT?!

SARA! CALM
DOWN, PLEASE.
WHAT ARE YOU
TALKING ABOUT?
WHO WON'T LET
US LEAVE?

THEM!

THEY'RE
HERE!...
NO...oh,
GOD...

DON'T
LET THEM...
TOUCH...
ME....

NOT
AGAIN!
NOT...
AGAIN.



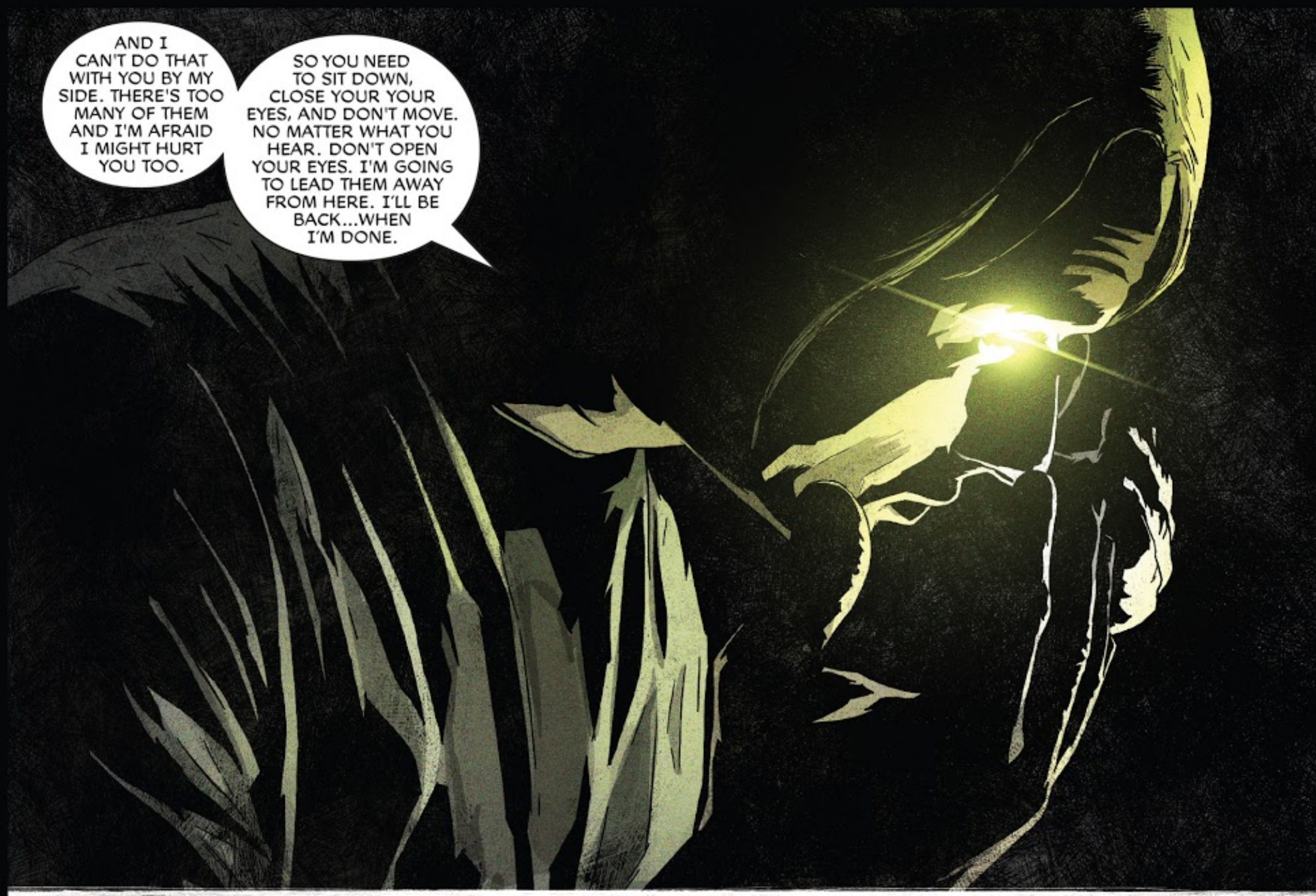
JIM...

YOU'RE
GOING TO
GET US
KILLED!

YOU
HAVE TO
SHUT YOUR
EYES!

SARA, YOU
NEED TO LISTEN
TO ME AND DO
EXACTLY WHAT
I SAY!

WE HAVE
TO MOVE
CLOSER TO
WHERE I ENTERED
THIS PLACE.
BUT I NEED
A CLEAR PATH
FIRST.



AND I
CAN'T DO THAT
WITH YOU BY MY
SIDE. THERE'S TOO
MANY OF THEM
AND I'M AFRAID
I MIGHT HURT
YOU TOO.

SO YOU NEED
TO SIT DOWN,
CLOSE YOUR YOUR
EYES, AND DON'T MOVE.
NO MATTER WHAT YOU
HEAR. DON'T OPEN
YOUR EYES. I'M GOING
TO LEAD THEM AWAY
FROM HERE. I'LL BE
BACK...WHEN
I'M DONE.



CAN
YOU DO
THAT FOR
ME?



I...

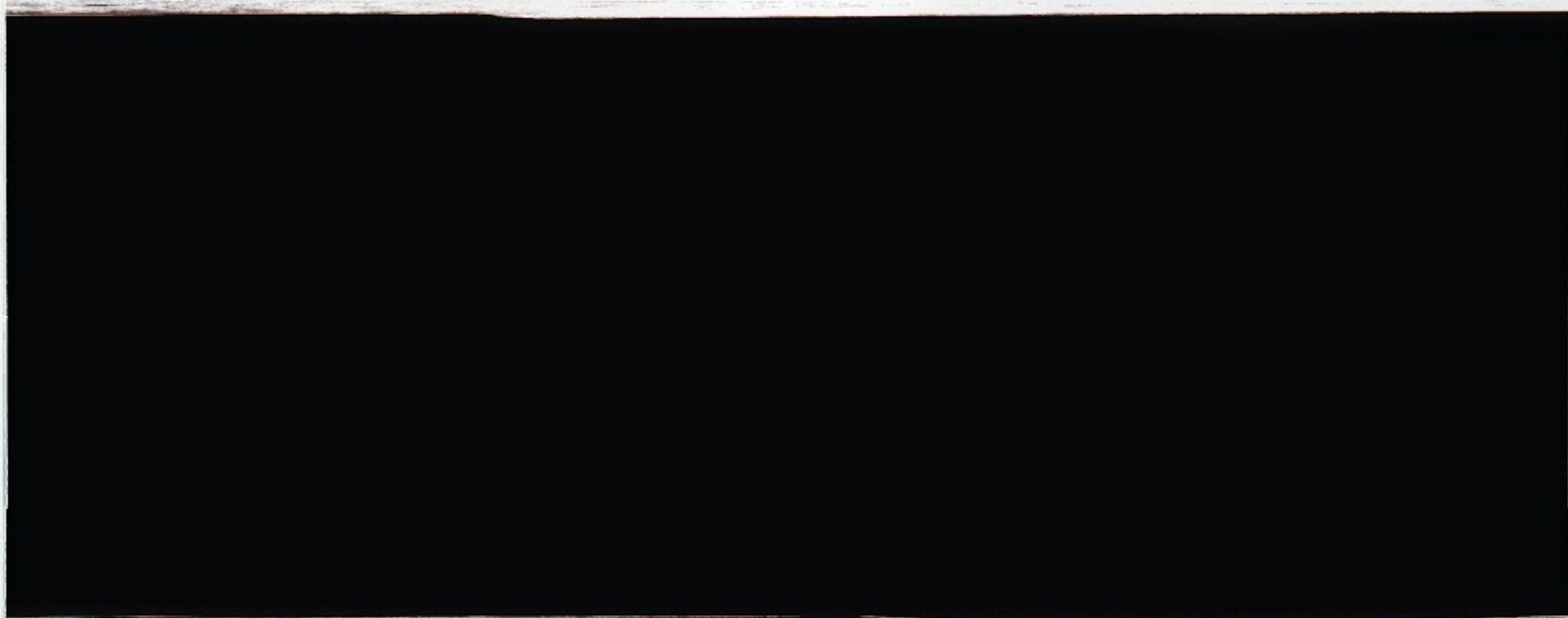
I THINK
SO.

GOOD.

WHAT
IF YOU...
DON'T COME
BACK?

I'M
COMING
BACK.







SARA.

REACH
OUT YOUR
HAND AND TAKE
MINE... BUT DON'T
OPEN YOUR EYES!
SQUEEZE THEM
SHUT AS HARD AS
YOU CAN!

THEY'RE
STILL HERE--
AREN'T THEY?!!
I HEAR THEM!
THEY'RE STILL
HERE!

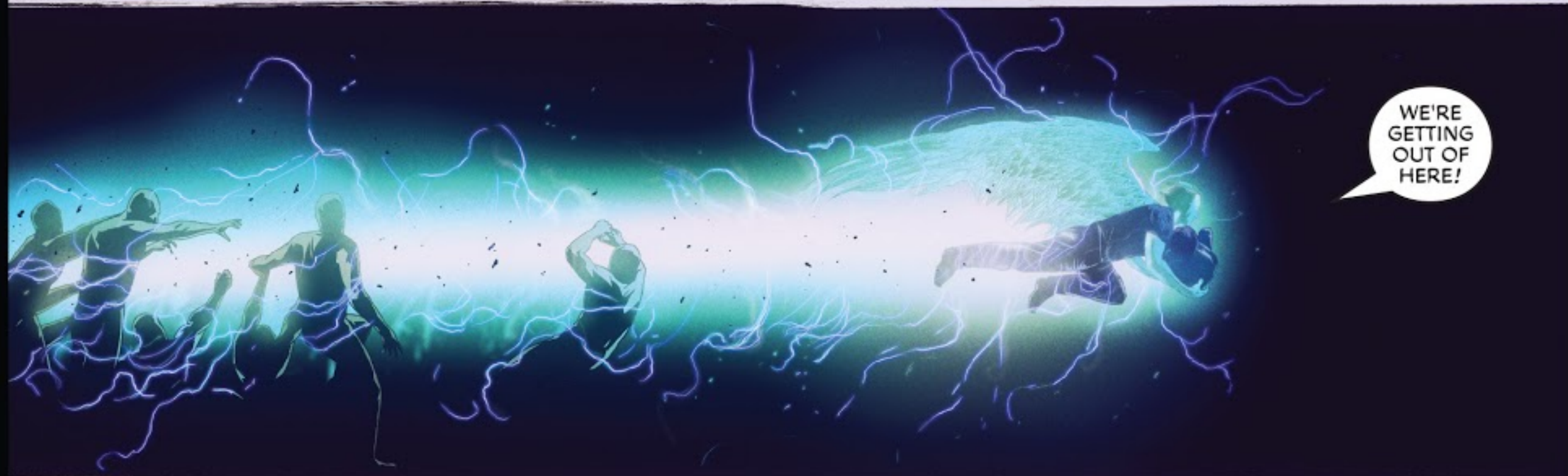
OKAY...
NOW I'M GOING
TO LET GO FOR
A SECOND. YOU'RE
GOING TO FEEL SOME-
THING. BUT KEEP YOUR
EYES CLOSED. NO
MATTER WHAT
HAPPENS... DON'T
LOOK!



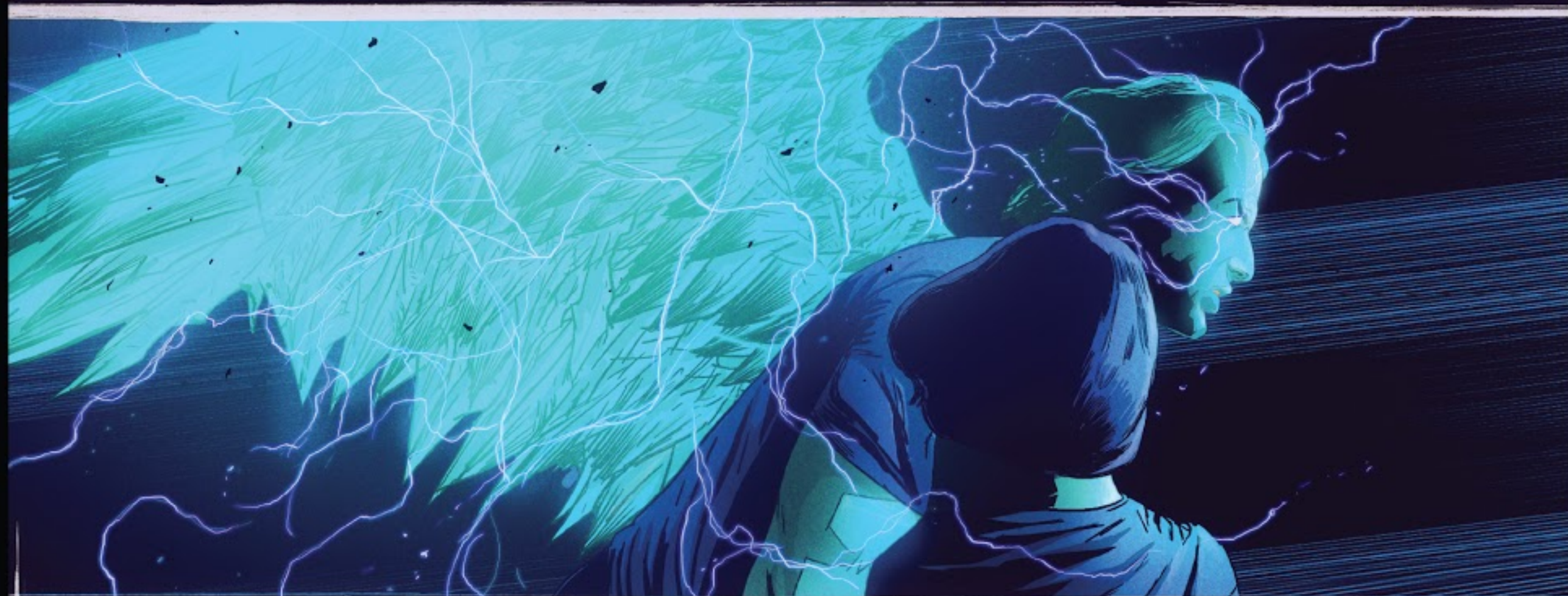
nnktctcktkkkkchkkkkkkkkkkcktkckkck



GET
READY,
SARA...



WE'RE
GETTING
OUT OF
HERE!



YOU'RE
DOING
GREAT. BUT
THERE'S
ONE MORE
THING...

YOU'RE
GOING TO FEEL
A SENSATION. OVER
YOUR ENTIRE BODY.
DON'T BE ALARMED...
IT'LL ONLY LAST A
FEW SECONDS.

I'M
GOING TO
COUNT TO
THREE. THEN
IT'LL BE
OVER.



ONE.

TWO.









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uhn? Jim...?

OH MY GOD!... JIM!

WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!

AND... AND WHY ARE YOU IN MY BED? WHY AM I NAKED? WHAT'S GOING ON?!

SARA. PLEASE. LET ME EXPLAIN.

EXPLAIN?! EXPLAIN WHAT? I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD BE HERE. NOT LIKE THIS!

I COULDN'T LEAVE YOU. NOT IN THE CONDITION YOU WERE IN.

WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

ABOUT LAST NIGHT. DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING?



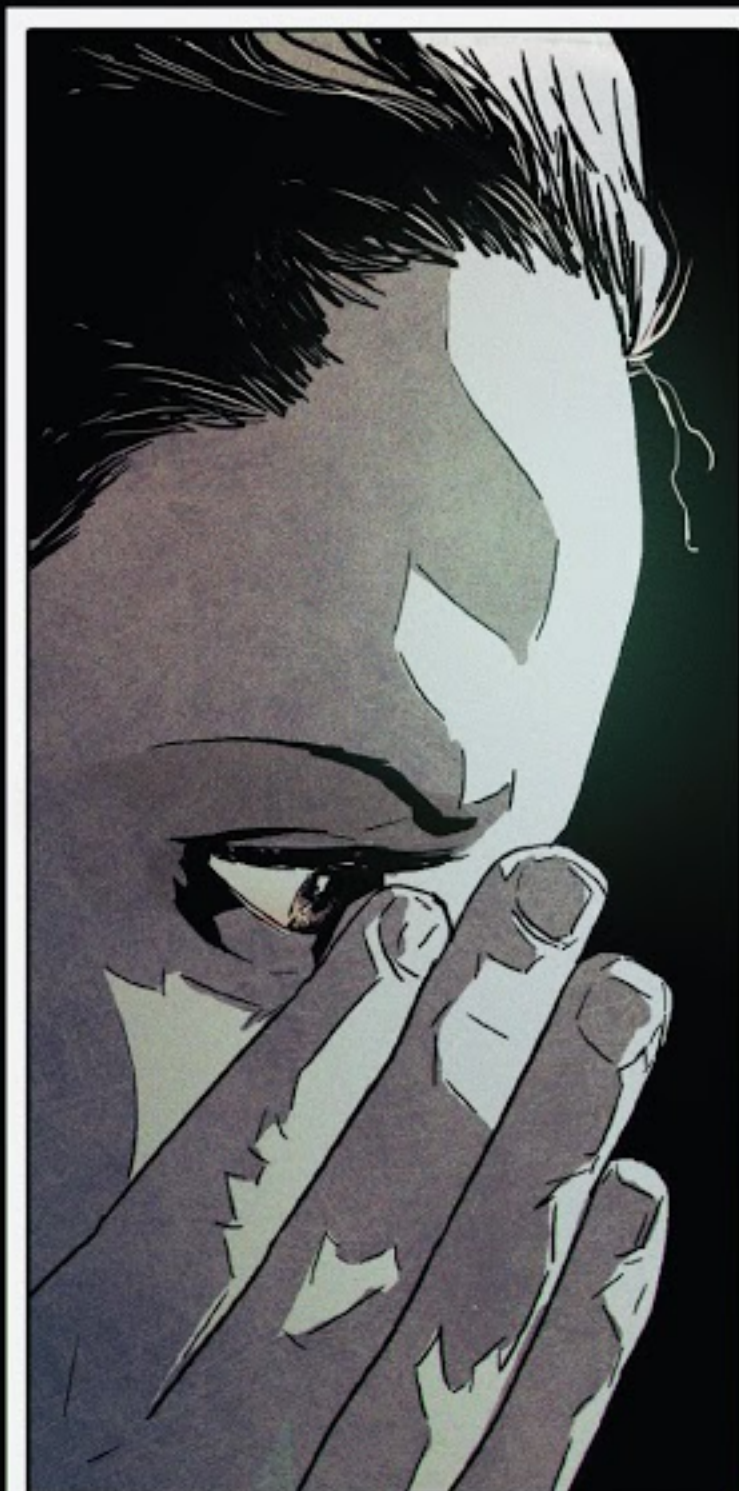
I... I REMEMBER SEEING YOU. AND YOU WERE HOLDING ME AND...

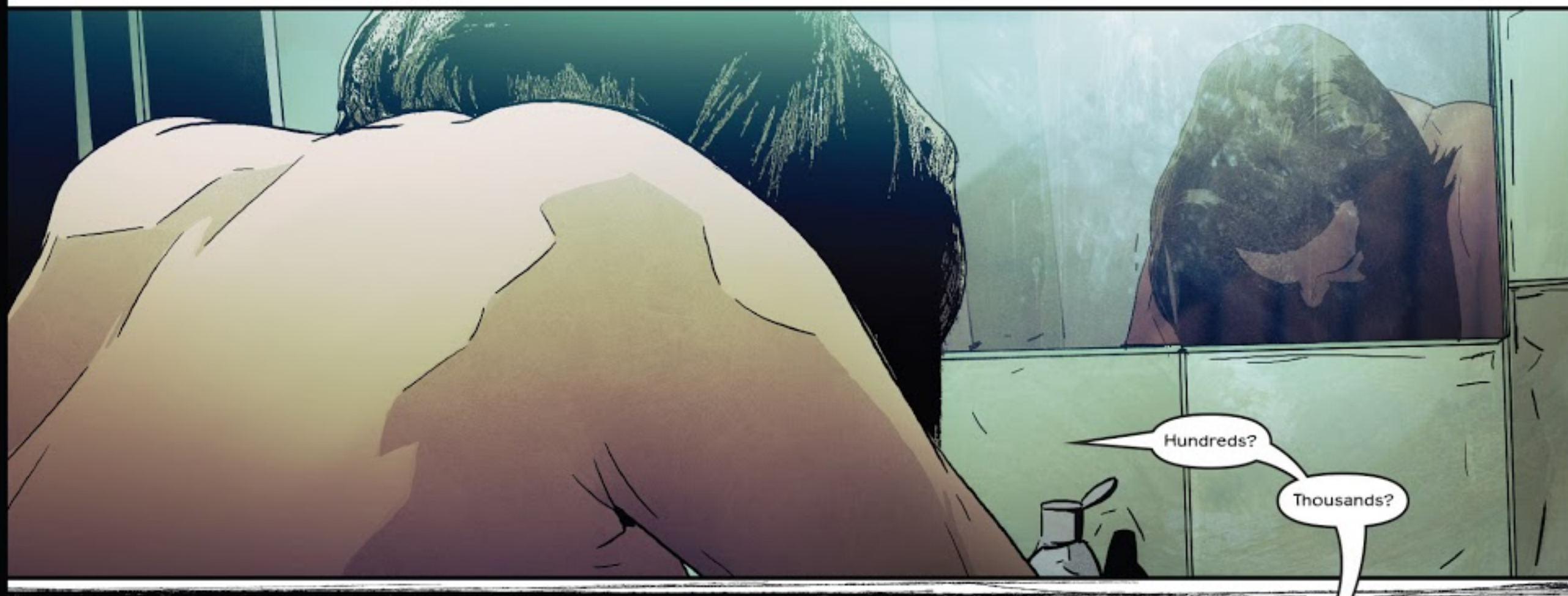
no!

YOU DIDN'T... I MEAN WE DIDN'T DO-- DID WE?









Hundreds?

Thousands?



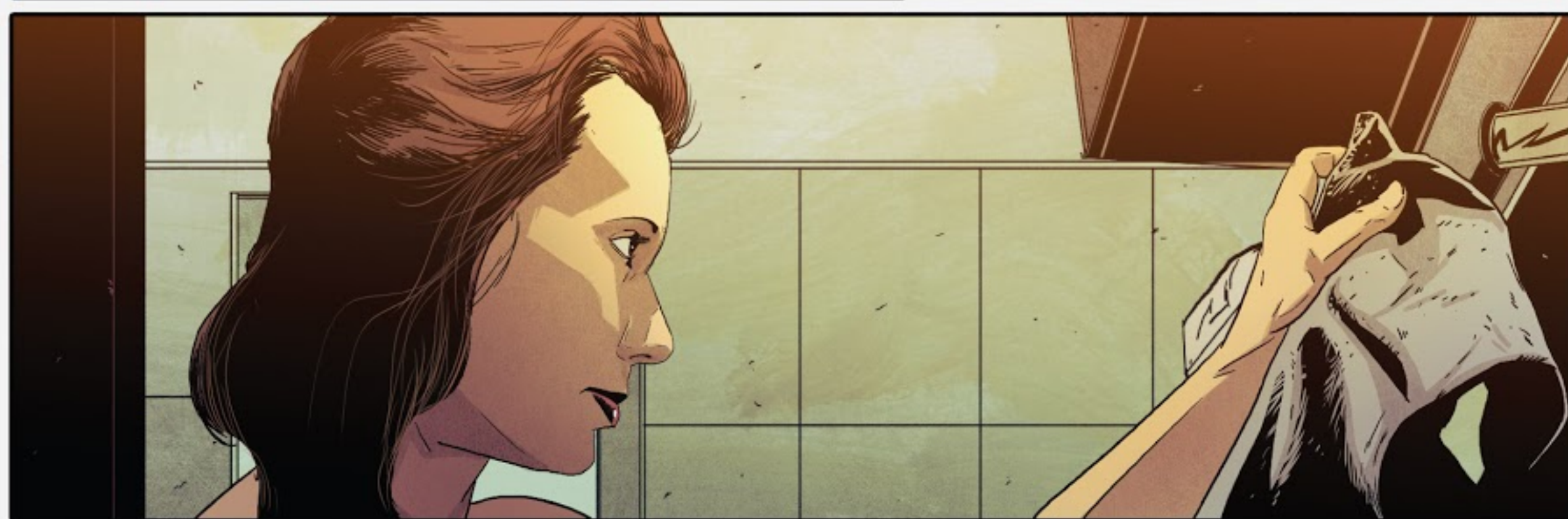
All those bedside confessions during his coma. He must have heard them. Maybe that's why this is happening.

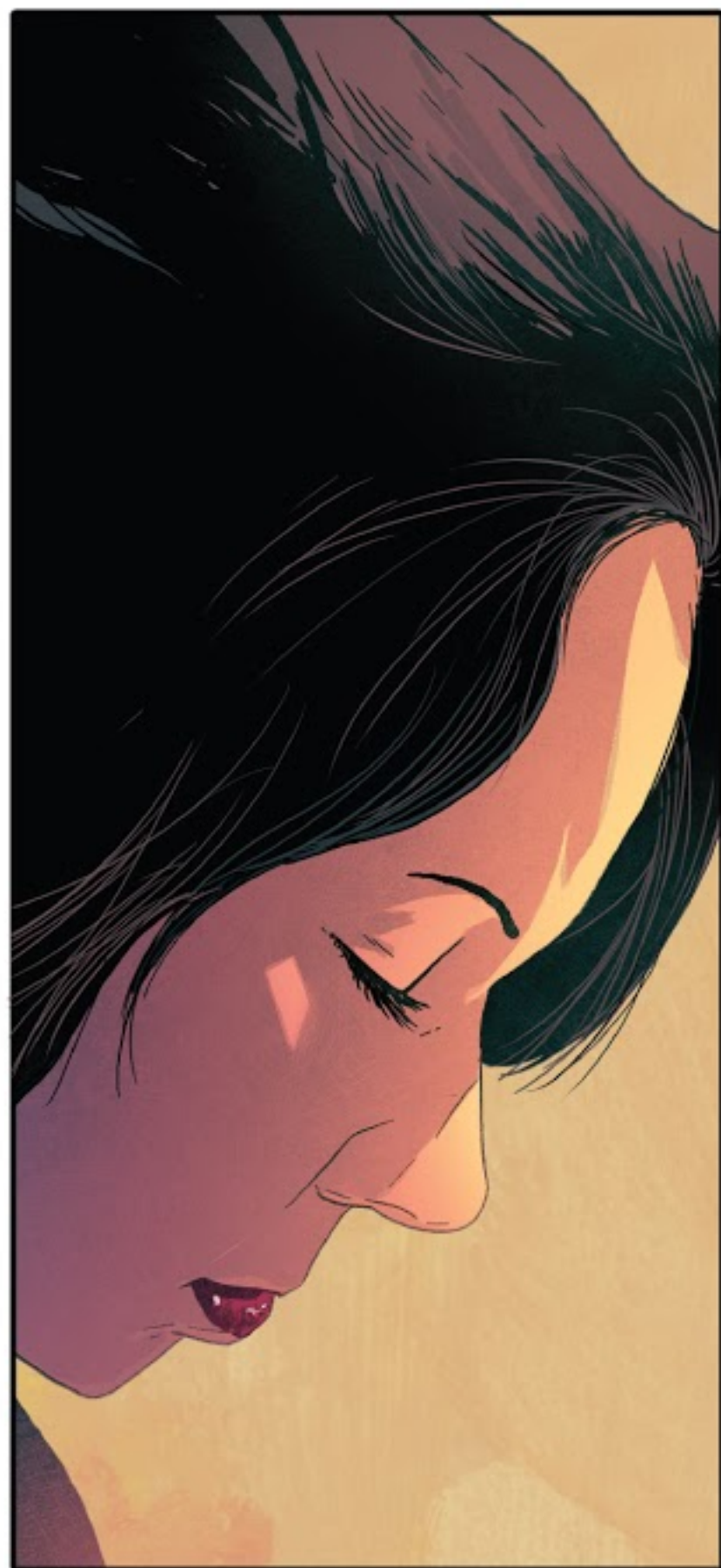


Maybe God's telling me it's okay to finally let my feelings show.



To stop fighting the temptations.







mmm...

SMELLS WONDERFUL IN HERE.

I MADE SOME COFFEE. YOU LIKE YOURS WITH SUGAR ONLY, NO CREAM, RIGHT?

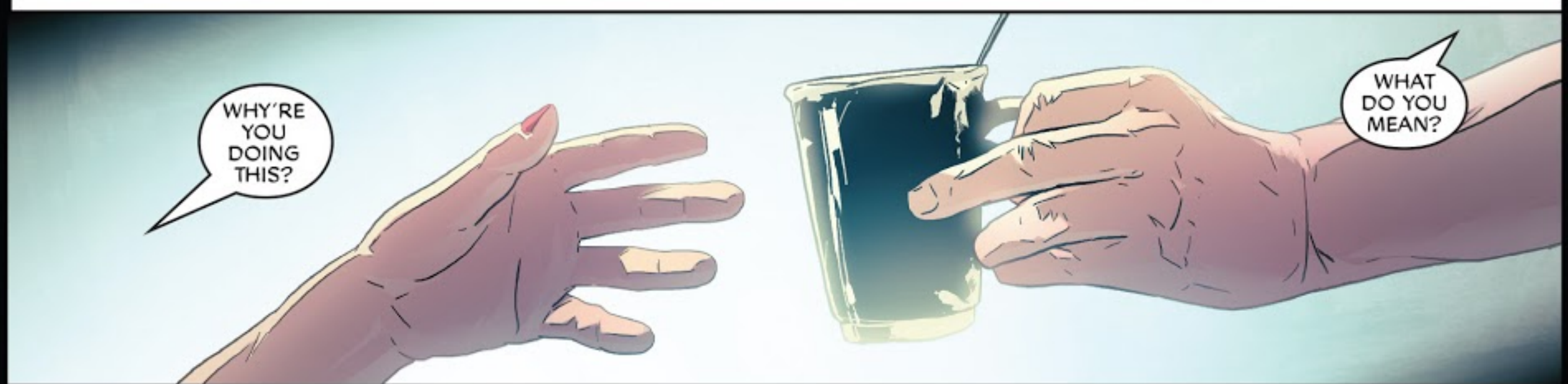
YEAH.

HOPE IT'S NOT TOO STRONG. I DON'T KNOW HOW THE PROPORTIONS WORK ON YOUR MACHINE.

I'M SURE IT'S PERFECT.

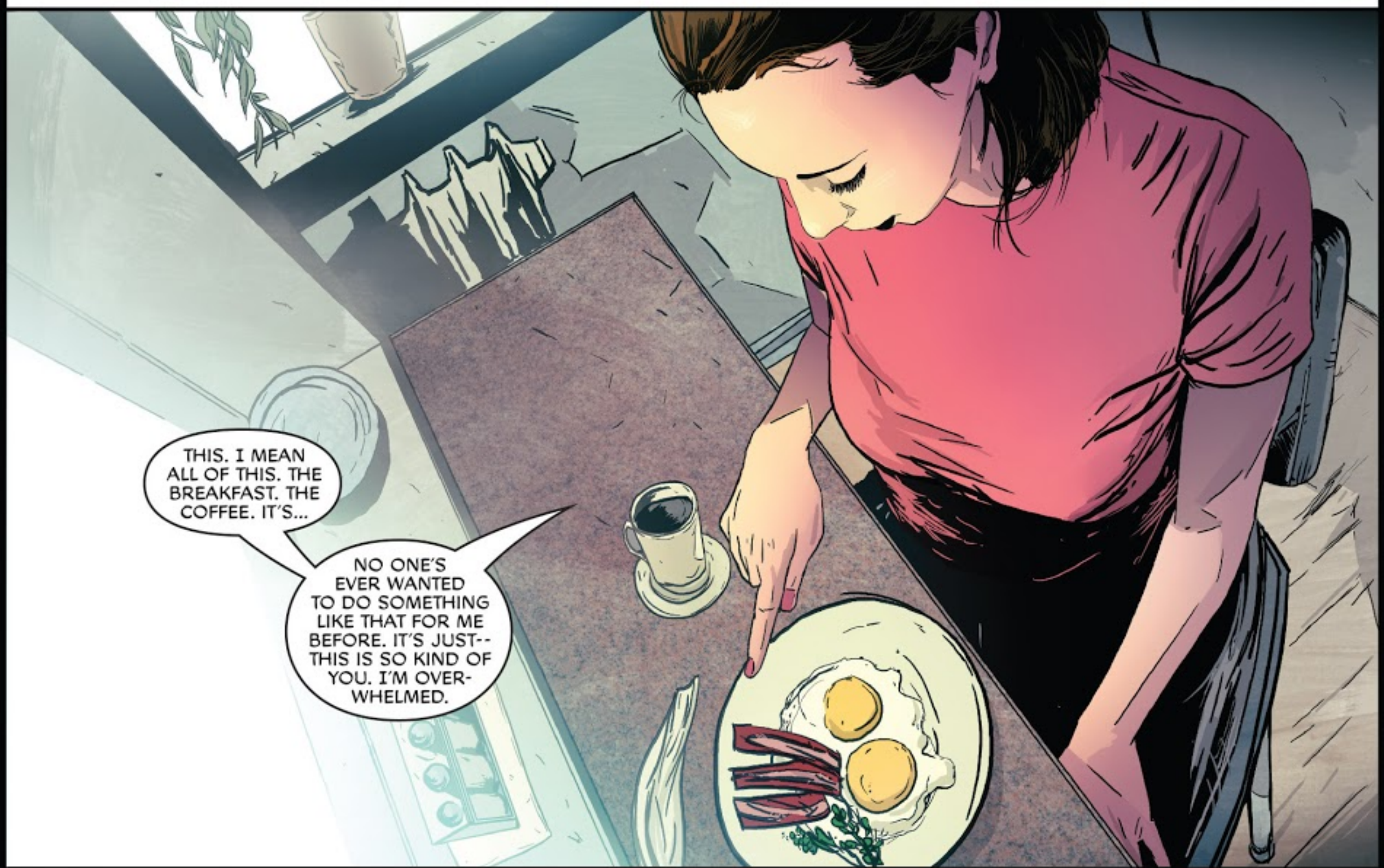
I MADE SOME BREAKFAST TOO. IT'S ON THE COUNTER. I'LL GET YOU SOME UTENSILS.

JIM.



WHY'RE YOU DOING THIS?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



THIS. I MEAN ALL OF THIS. THE BREAKFAST. THE COFFEE. IT'S...

NO ONE'S EVER WANTED TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT FOR ME BEFORE. IT'S JUST-- THIS IS SO KIND OF YOU. I'M OVERWHELMED.



FIRST OFF, IT'S MORNING. PEOPLE EAT BREAKFAST IN THE MORNING. MY BACON AND EGGS COMBO ISN'T TOO ORIGINAL.

SECONDLY, YOU DESERVE IT.

AND THE REASON YOU DESERVE IT IS BECAUSE I'VE BEEN PUTTING YOU THROUGH PAIN, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY, SINCE I WOKE FROM MY COMA...

JIM, YOU'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG.

LET ME FINISH.

PLEASE.



I'M SORRY.

SEE, THAT'S PART OF THE PROBLEM. YOU **SHOULDN'T** BE THE ONE SAYING SORRY. I SHOULD. I'M THE ONE THAT'S TURNED YOUR LIFE INTO A MESS. YOU USED TO HAVE A NICE JOB AND FRIENDS AND LOTS MORE PEACE AND QUIET. BUT ALL OF THAT'S GONE. SHATTERED. AND IT'S BECAUSE OF ME.

I NEVER HAD FRIENDS. NONE THAT REALLY CARED ABOUT ME. NOT THE WAY YOU DO.

ARE YOU KIDDING?!

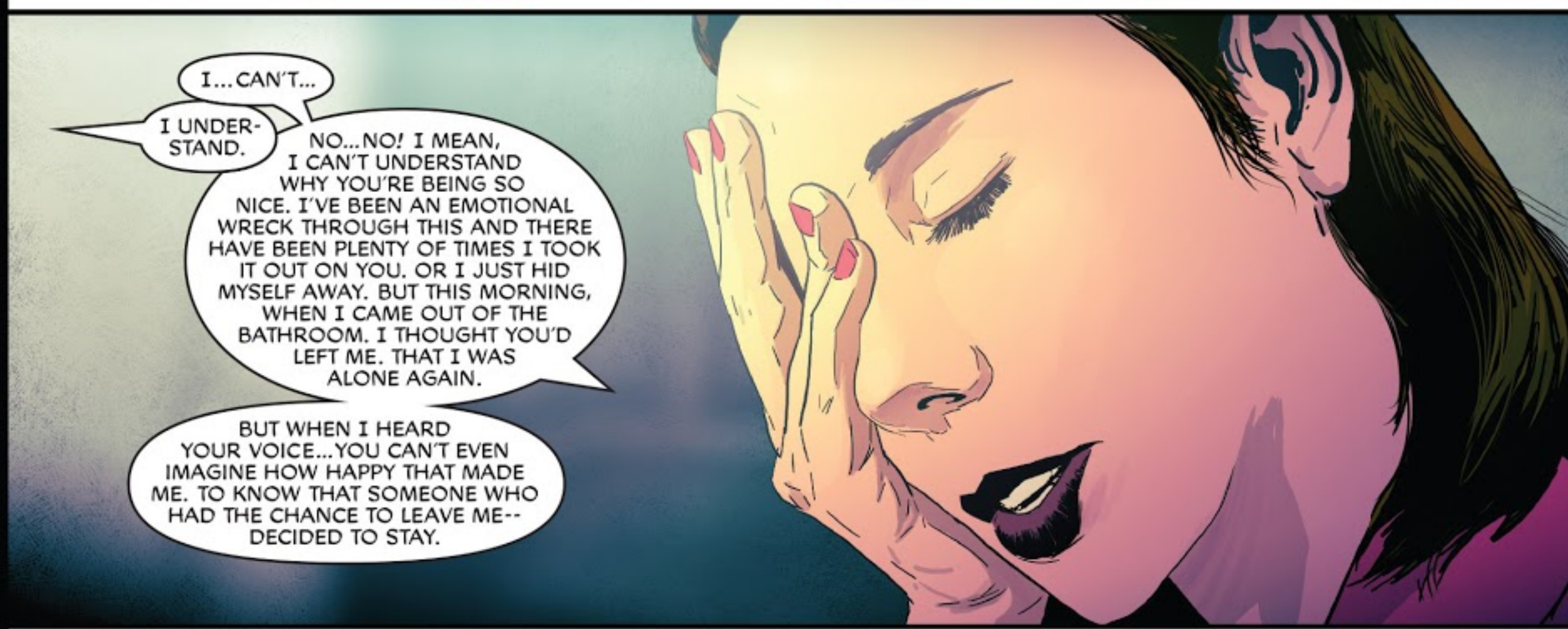


I'VE TREATED YOU LIKE CRAP MOST OF THE TIME. AND LIKE I SAID-- YOU DON'T DESERVE THAT.

SO I'M SORRY. I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE ME.

NOT THEN. NOT NOW. NOT EVER!

BUT IF YOU CAN, I'D LIKE TO MAKE YOU A PROMISE THAT I'LL NEVER PUT YOU IN A SITUATION YOU'RE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH EVER AGAIN. YOU'RE TOO GOOD A WOMAN, SARA. YOU DESERVE SO MUCH MORE THAN I'VE BEEN GIVING YOU.



I... CAN'T...

I UNDERSTAND.

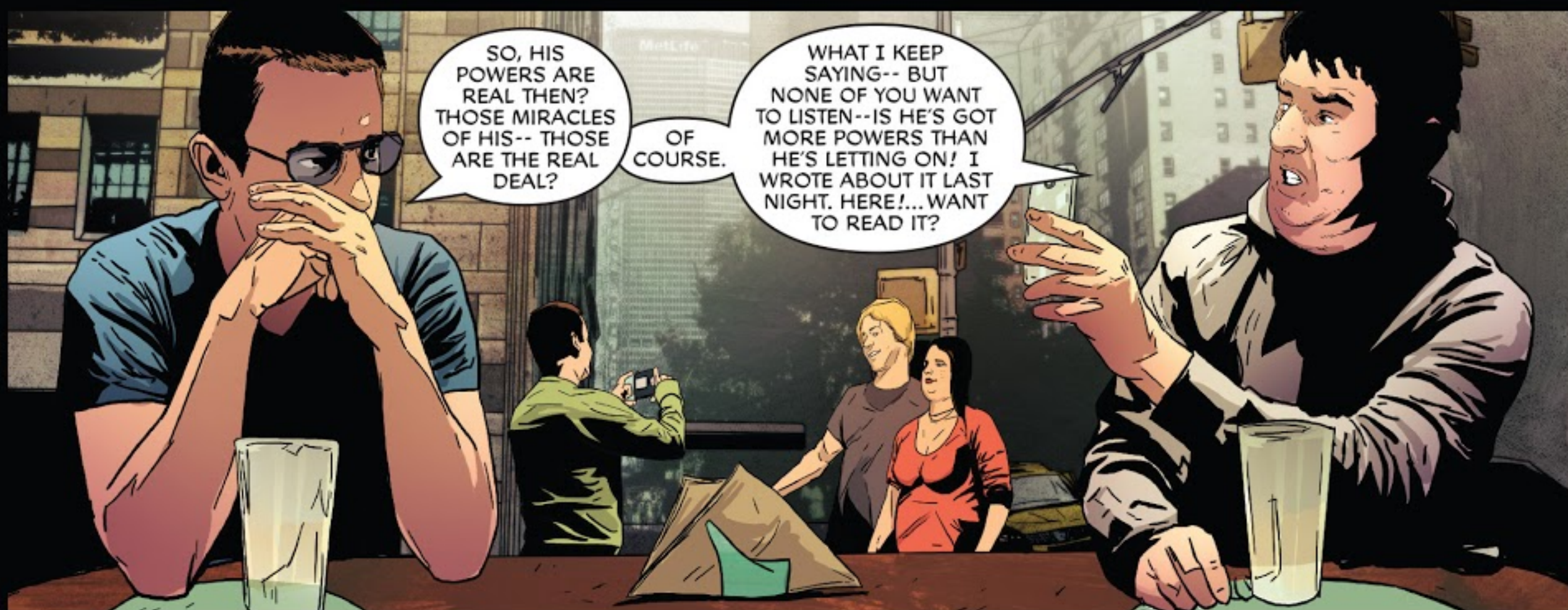
NO... NO! I MEAN, I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE BEING SO NICE. I'VE BEEN AN EMOTIONAL WRECK THROUGH THIS AND THERE HAVE BEEN PLENTY OF TIMES I TOOK IT OUT ON YOU. OR I JUST HID MYSELF AWAY. BUT THIS MORNING, WHEN I CAME OUT OF THE BATHROOM. I THOUGHT YOU'D LEFT ME. THAT I WAS ALONE AGAIN.

BUT WHEN I HEARD YOUR VOICE... YOU CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE HOW HAPPY THAT MADE ME. TO KNOW THAT SOMEONE WHO HAD THE CHANCE TO LEAVE ME-- DECIDED TO STAY.





BECAUSE IF THEY EVER FOUND OUT ABOUT HIS 'OTHER' POWERS, HE'D BE TOAST.



SO, HIS POWERS ARE REAL THEN? THOSE MIRACLES OF HIS-- THOSE ARE THE REAL DEAL?

OF COURSE.

WHAT I KEEP SAYING-- BUT NONE OF YOU WANT TO LISTEN--IS HE'S GOT MORE POWERS THAN HE'S LETTING ON! I WROTE ABOUT IT LAST NIGHT. HERE!... WANT TO READ IT?



BEN, I'VE READ ALL YOUR SHIT! I GET THAT YOU THINK HE'S TIED TO THIS 'SPAWN' GUY SOMEHOW.

HE IS SPAWN!

WHATEVER! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE THAT THINKS THAT. YOUR CLUES AND THEORIES, THAT'S ALL YOU WRITE ABOUT. DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE A BIT OBSESSED WITH HIM?

NO. BECAUSE I'M RIGHT.



YEAH? WELL, TOO BAD YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO MEET HIM.

I KNOW. BUT THAT'D BE SWEET!

I'D SAY "JIM, YOU NEED TO GET OUT MORE. SEE THE PEOPLE." THEN I'D ASK HIM ABOUT ALL HIS TRIPS TO HELL.

DUDE, YOU'RE CRAZY.



HOW'S YOUR DAY GOING TODAY?

OH, ME? GOOD! THANK YOU FOR ASKING. YOU DOING NICE TOO?

TRYING.

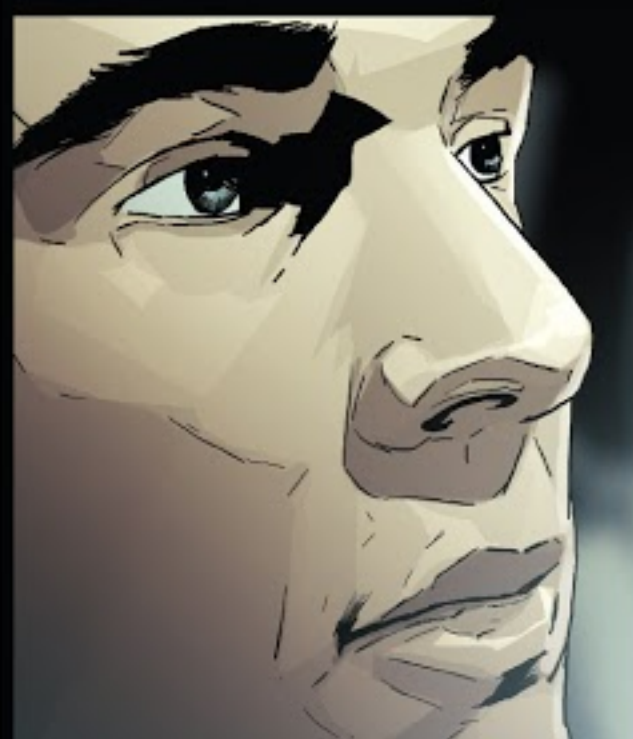
GOOD. IT'S IMPORTANT TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF, DON'T YOU THINK? LOOK AT ME, FIFTEEN YEARS I DRIVE THIS CAR. STILL I ENJOY.

THAT'S FANTASTIC.

HOW ABOUT YOU, SIR? YOU LIKE YOUR JOB?

I THINK SO--MOST OF THE TIME.

THEN YOU'RE BLESSED.



HEY, MISTER! I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE THAT MAN. FROM THE TELEVISION YOU WERE ON IT!



GUILTY AS CHARGED.

YOU NOW BECOME **THE SECOND** FAMOUS PERSON THAT RIDES MY CAB. I TOOK A PICTURE. WANT TO SEE?

SURE.



HE'S A SINGER OF RAP, MY SON TELLS ME. PRETTY YOUNG TOO FOR FAMOUS GUY.

BUT HE HAS A WEIRD NAME. MAYBE AFTER THOSE CANDIES--M AND M.



LOOK AT HIM. YOU KNOW THIS MAN?



UM... I'VE BEEN AWAY FROM THINGS FOR AWHILE, BUT I'M SURE HE'S QUITE GOOD.



YES! THAT'S WHAT MY SON TELLS ME TOO! HE'S A BIG SHOT WITH THE KIDS. IT'S TOO LOUD FOR MY EARS THOUGH.



BUT MISTER, CAN I ASK A FAVOR FROM YOU?

SURE. WHAT DO YOU NEED?

I WON'T BOTHER YOU FOR PHOTO. BUT WHAT I SAW YOU DO ON TV WAS A MIRACLE. WHAT YOU DO IS GOOD. YOU HELP THE PEOPLE.

THANKS.

SO IT WOULD BE A GREAT FAVOR TO ME IF YOU KEEP DOING WHAT YOU DO. YOU ARE A SPECIAL MAN.

Moments Later.



TAKE CARE, MY FRIEND. MY WIFE WILL BE IN SHOCK WHEN I TELL HER OF YOU.

SAY HI TO HER FOR ME.

I BELIEVE BECKY SAID THAT SHE HAS MOST OF THE PERMITS NEEDED EXCEPT THE MEDICAL MACHINE CERTIFICATE.

THE LAWYERS THINK THEY'LL HAVE THE PAPERWORK THEY NEED TO FILE FOR THE REST OF OUR REQUESTS BY THURSDAY. IS THAT STILL TRACKING?

IT IS. FRIDAY MORNING AT THE LATEST.

MARKETING HAS ALREADY BEGUN FINDING CO-SPONSORS FOR THE FOUNDATION'S INITIAL PUBLIC EVENT IN AUGUST.

THAT SHOULD TIE IN NICELY WITH THE MEDIA COVERAGE WE'VE ALREADY LOCKED DOWN FOR THAT TIME.

AS LONG AS THE CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE HOLDS OUR OTHER INITIATIVES WILL DOVETAIL NICELY. ANY QUESTIONS?



HOPE I'M NOT INTERRUPTING.

MORNING, MR. DOWNING. WE WERE JUST WINDING DOWN.

MARC...? IS THAT TRUE?



YEP!

ALRIGHT, GANG, GOOD STUFF TODAY. REMEMBER WE'VE GOT AN 'ALL HANDS ON DECK' MEETING NEXT TUESDAY AT TEN.

SIT DOWN, JIM. I'LL BE WITH YOU IN A MINUTE.



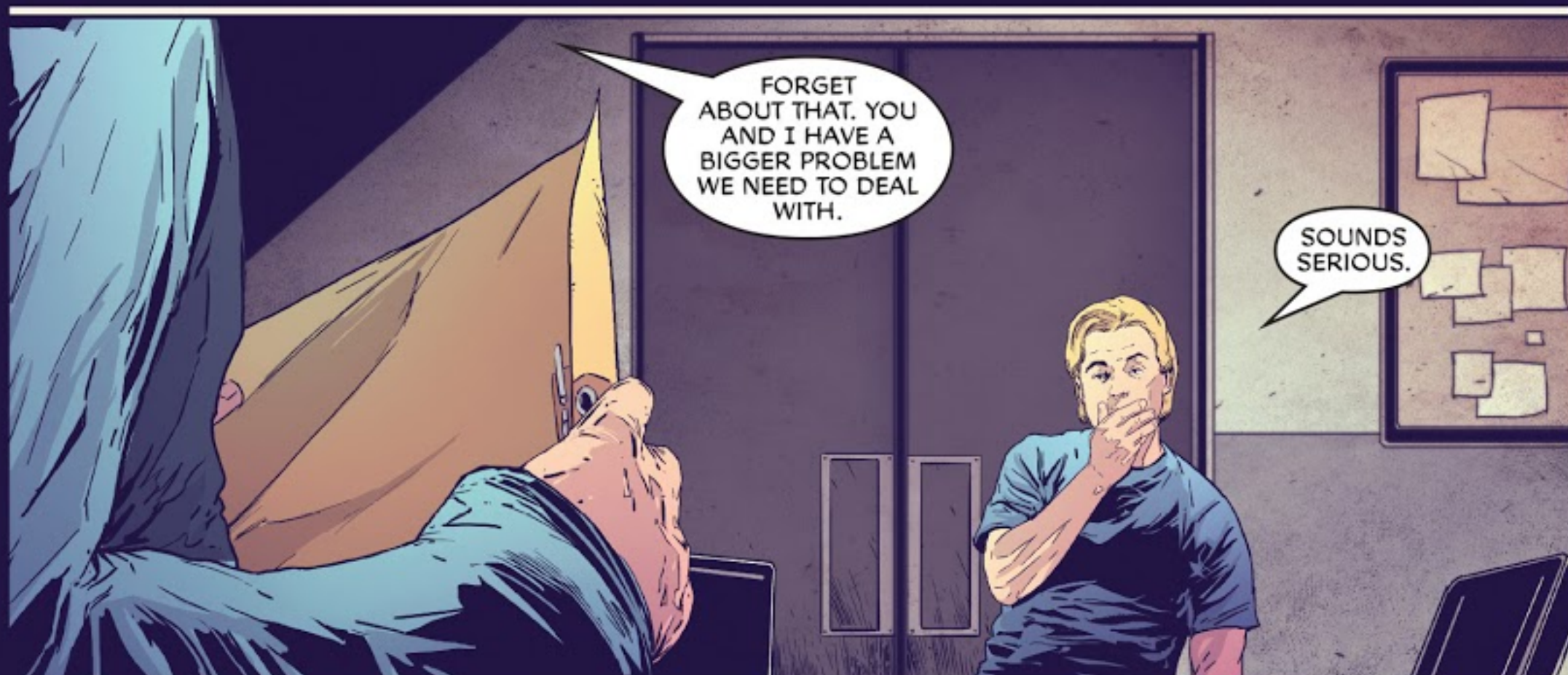
HEY, SORRY ABOUT MISSING THE MEETING, TRAFFIC WAS KIND OF CRAZY.

THAT'S OKAY. THAT'S NOT REALLY WHY I NEEDED YOU HERE. WE NEED TO TALK.

WHAT'S UP? YOU NEED ME FOR AN INTERVIEW OR SOMETHING?

I NEED YOU TO BE HONEST.

OKAY. WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND THIS TIME? AND IF IT'S ABOUT THE OTHER NIGHT... I ALREADY APOLOGIZED.



FORGET ABOUT THAT. YOU AND I HAVE A BIGGER PROBLEM WE NEED TO DEAL WITH.

SOUNDS SERIOUS.

BEFORE WE START, LET'S GET SOMETHING STRAIGHT RIGHT NOW. THIS ISN'T *SOME F*CKIN' JOKE!* SO WIPE THAT DAMN SMIRK OFF YOUR FACE! I NEED A FEW MINUTES OF YOU ACTING LIKE AN ADULT. THINK YOU CAN DO THAT? BECAUSE I'M GETTING TIRED OF BEING MADE TO LOOK LIKE A FOOL.

YOU'VE GOT MY ATTENTION.

GET TO YOUR POINT.



HERE'S MY POINT...

AND IT'S PRETTY STRAIGHT-FORWARD. WHERE DID YOU GET THIS PHOTO?*



*Spawn 202-- Todd



AND DON'T GIVE ME THAT CRAP YOU DON'T KNOW! IT CAME FROM SOME-PLACE! I WANT TO KNOW WHERE! YOU DIDN'T JUST WAKE FROM YOUR COMA HOLDING THIS. SOMEONE GAVE IT TO YOU!

WHO?

WHY'RE YOU MAKING SUCH A BIG DEAL ABOUT THIS?





AND THERE'S MORE.



HERE!
TAKE A
LOOK!



WHERE'D
YOU GET
THOSE?



YOU'RE
NOT
LISTENING?!

IT DOESN'T
MATTER WHO. IT
MATTERS WHY. WHY ARE SO
MANY PEOPLE AFRAID OF YOUR
PAST THEY'RE WILLING TO KILL TO
KEEP IT QUIET? THEY KILLED MY
FRIENDS, JIM...BECAUSE I ASKED
THEM TO INVESTIGATE THAT WOMAN
YOU'RE IN THE PICTURE WITH.
THEN THE C.I.A. -- OR SOME
ORGANIZATION -- STARTED
POKING AROUND.

STARTED TALKING
ABOUT INSTALLATION
ATTACKS AND ASSASSINA-
TIONS AND THEN THEY
HANDED ME THESE PICTURES.
THEN JUST WALKED AWAY.
NO EXPLANATION
WHATSOEVER!

IT'S HARD
ENOUGH DEALING WITH
THE PEOPLE AT THIS JOB WHO
THINK I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO
RUN THIS FOUNDATION. OR HAVING
TO EXPLAIN TO SUSAN EVERY DAY
WHY I'M SO DAMN MOODY --
WHICH JUST EATS AWAY AT
HER TRUST FOR ME.



SO,
I'LL CALM DOWN
NOW AND
SIMPLY ASK...

WHO IS
SHE? AND WHAT'S
YOUR CONNECTION
TO ALL THIS. I AT
LEAST DESERVE
THAT.



DON'T
I?



SCREW IT!

THATS IT! I'M DONE.
I CAN'T DO THIS
ANYMORE.

I QUIT!

MARC...
DON'T GO.
I NEED YOU
TO LOOK
AT ME.



yeah?

what's that?

ME.

TAKE A
LOOK AT
ME.

THIS
MAY EXPLAIN
MOST OF THE
QUESTIONS
YOU'RE
ASKING.



Hours Later.

HEY, SARA,
SORRY I DIDN'T
CALL EARLIER. MY
MEETING WITH MARC
TOOK A LITTLE
LONGER THAN I
THOUGHT.

NO. NO.
EVERYTHING'S
OKAY. BUT IT
EMPHASIZED HOW
MUCH YOU AND I
NEED TO CLEAR
THE AIR
STILL.

YOU
SURE IT'S
NOT TOO
LATE?

TONIGHT?



GREAT.
I'LL SEE YOU
THEN.

SARA?

YOU HOME?

I'M
RIGHT
HERE.



SPAWN



Kudranski
McFARLANE

+fco



TRY IT! GO
AHEAD...!

YOU MAKE
A MOVE AND
I'LL
KILL
YOU
RIGHT HERE!!

YOU
HEAR ME,
SARA?! I'LL
GUT YOU
BEFORE
YOU EVEN
MOVE!

"WHEN TODAY STARTED, IT HAD
BEEN MY BEST DAY SINCE
WAKING FROM MY COMA. NOTHING
HAD EVEN COME CLOSE TO IT. BUT
NOW-- I WAS ABOUT TO MURDER
THE WOMAN I LOVED!"



"OR AT LEAST THE 'THING' THAT POSSESSED HER."

"AND ALL I CAN THINK OF--WHAT KEEPS RACING THROUGH MY MIND--IS HOW? HOW DID TODAY TURN INTO THIS?!"



Nine Hours Earlier



I DON'T HAVE TO GO TO THIS MEETING IF YOU DON'T WANT.

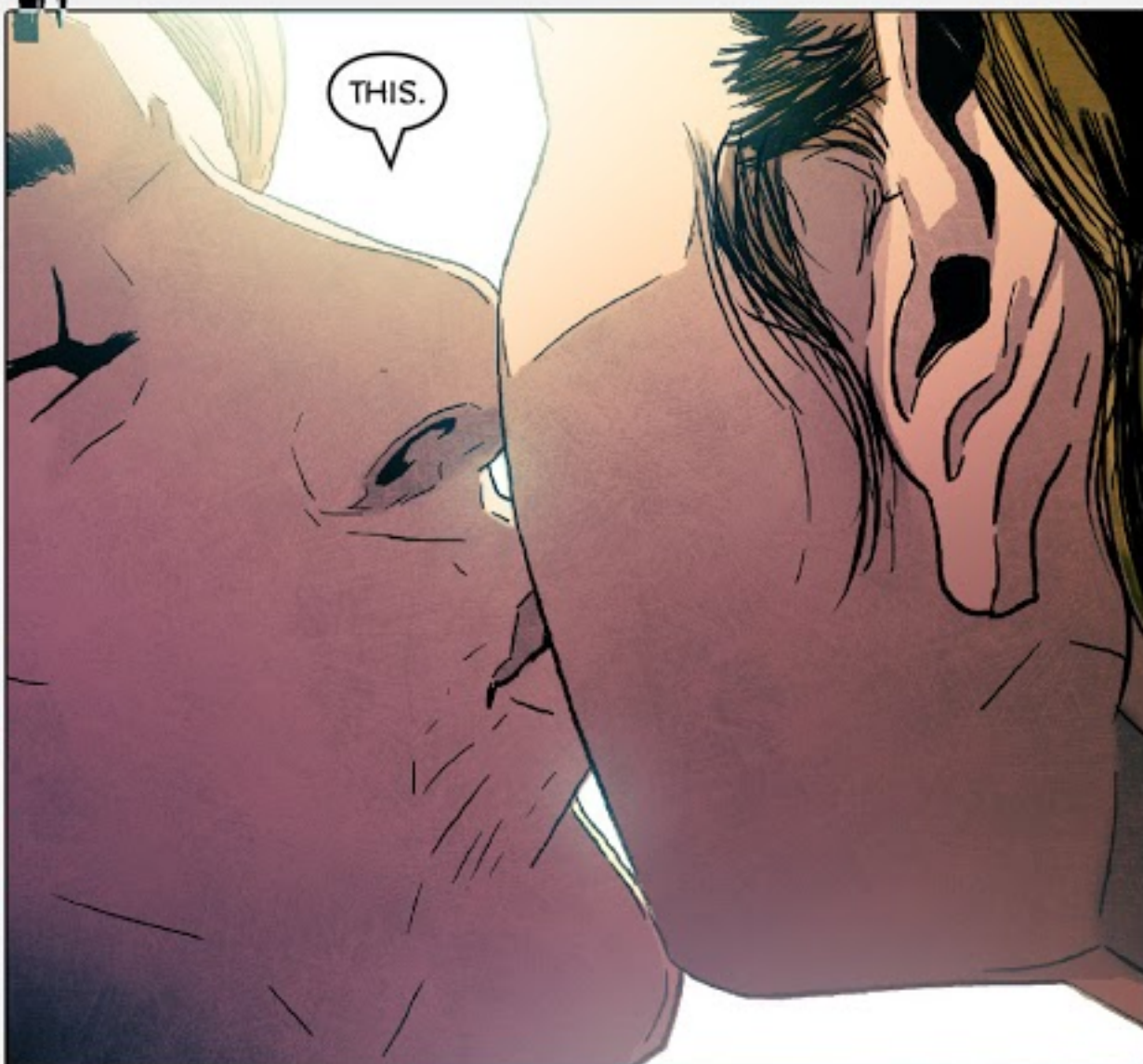
I'LL BE FINE.

YOU'RE SURE?

ABSOLUTELY.

OH!... I FORGOT SOMETHING.

WHAT?



THIS.



CALL YOU LATER.





Eight and a Half Hours Ago.



Eight Hours Ago.





NOW OPEN.

THIS IS WHY I'VE BEEN DISTANT-- AND HID THINGS FROM YOU. I JUST COULDN'T FIND THE RIGHT TIME TO LET YOU KNOW.



SO AS MUCH AS YOU'VE BEEN DEALING WITH... I'VE BEEN DOING THE SAME THING.

JIM, I...

I HAD NO IDEA.

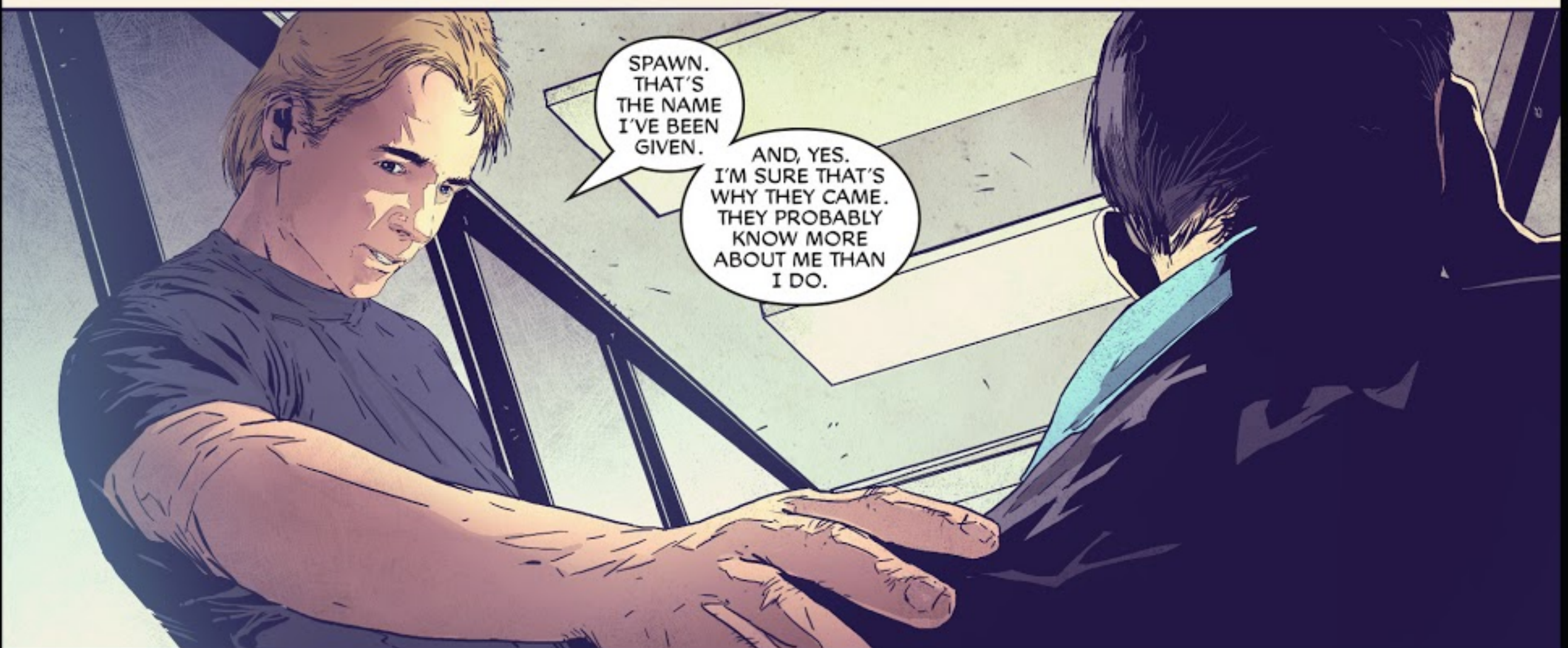
ME NEITHER. BUT THIS IS MY LIFE. AND I COULD SURE USE SOME HELP TRYING TO SORT IT OUT.

THE FOUNDATION? YOUR POWERS? WHAT'S THIS ALL MEAN NOW? YOU KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE COUNTING ON YOU AND HOW MANY LIVES YOU COULD POSSIBLY AFFECT IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS?



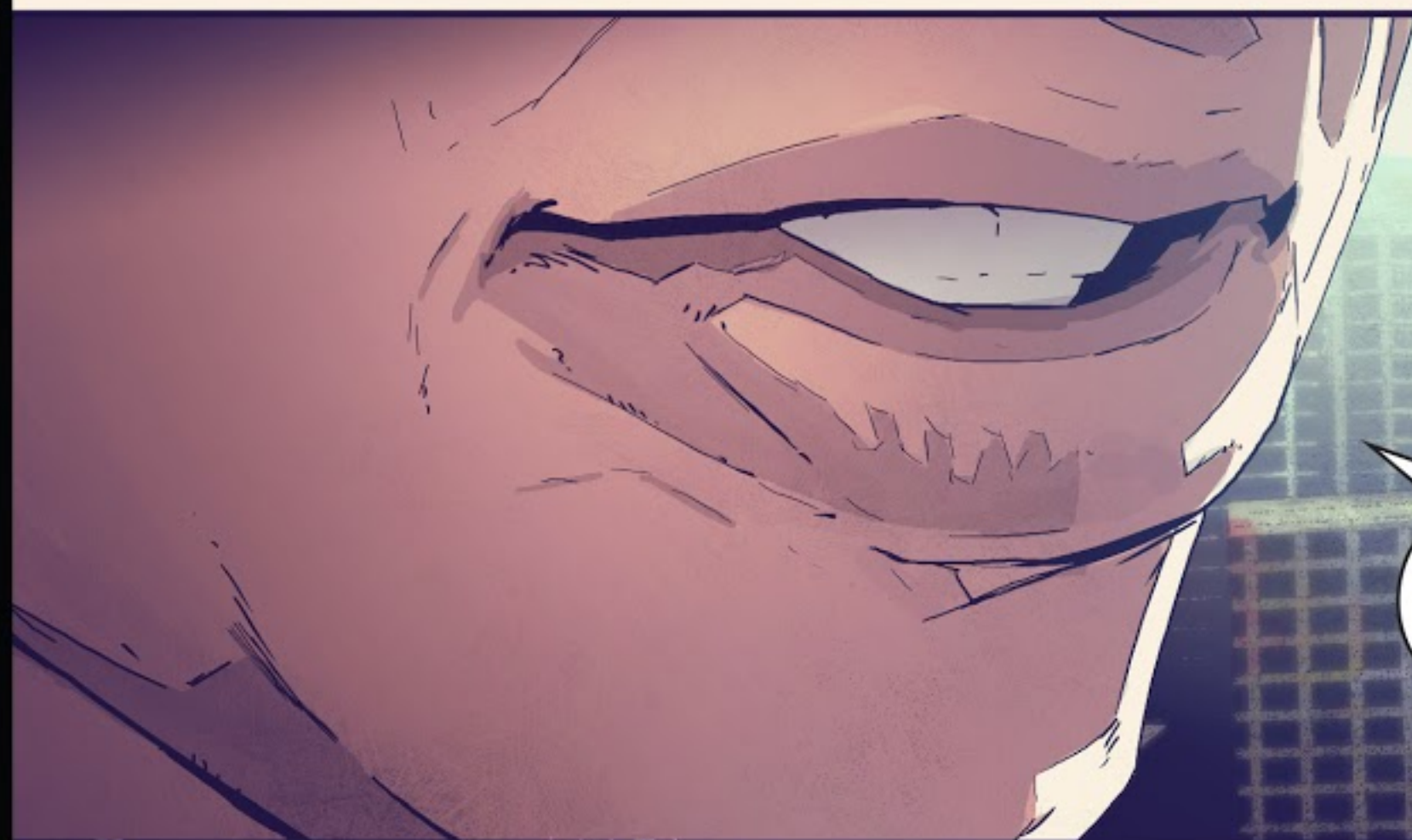
I KNOW, THAT'S WHY I'M ASKING FOR YOUR HELP.

SO THIS IS WHY THEY CAME AFTER ME. WHY THEY KILLED THOSE REPORTERS. THEY KNEW ABOUT THIS. ABOUT YOU BEING THIS... THIS...



SPAWN. THAT'S THE NAME I'VE BEEN GIVEN.

AND, YES. I'M SURE THAT'S WHY THEY CAME. THEY PROBABLY KNOW MORE ABOUT ME THAN I DO.

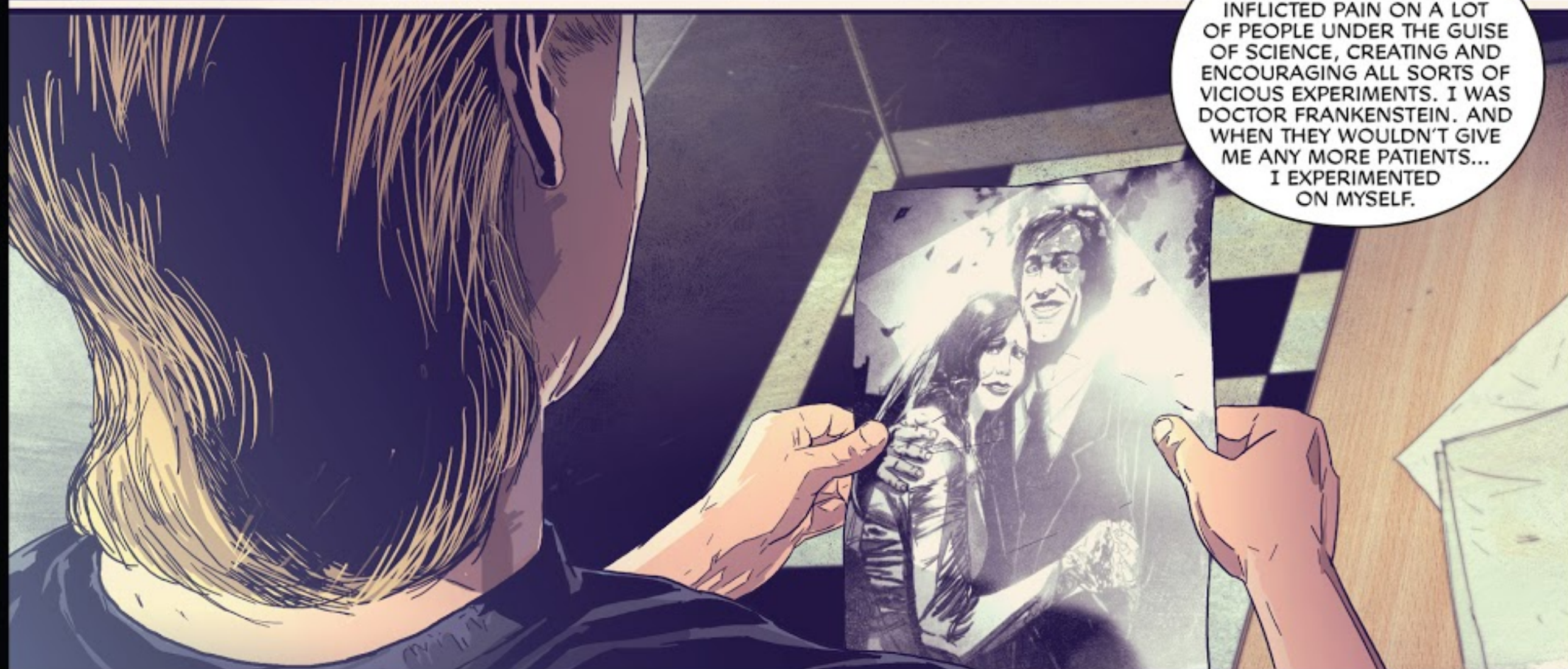


"I COULD TELL HE WAS SCARED. NOT ABOUT ME, BUT ABOUT EVERYTHING BECAUSE HE DIDN'T HAVE CONTROL OVER ANY OF IT. AND I KNEW EXACTLY HOW HE FELT. THAT'S WHY I NEEDED TO BE AS TRUTHFUL WITH HIM AS I COULD. IT TOOK ME NEARLY TWENTY MINUTES."

...CERTAIN PEOPLE HAD THOSE PIECES TO MY PAST. I WAS JUST TRYING TO SORT THROUGH WHAT WAS FACT AND WHAT WAS FICTION.

WHAT ABOUT HER? WAS SHE REAL?

SHE WAS. BUT SHE DIED BECAUSE OF ME. I INFLICTED PAIN ON A LOT OF PEOPLE UNDER THE GUISE OF SCIENCE, CREATING AND ENCOURAGING ALL SORTS OF VICIOUS EXPERIMENTS. I WAS DOCTOR FRANKENSTEIN. AND WHEN THEY WOULDN'T GIVE ME ANY MORE PATIENTS... I EXPERIMENTED ON MYSELF.



I BECAME MY OWN FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER...

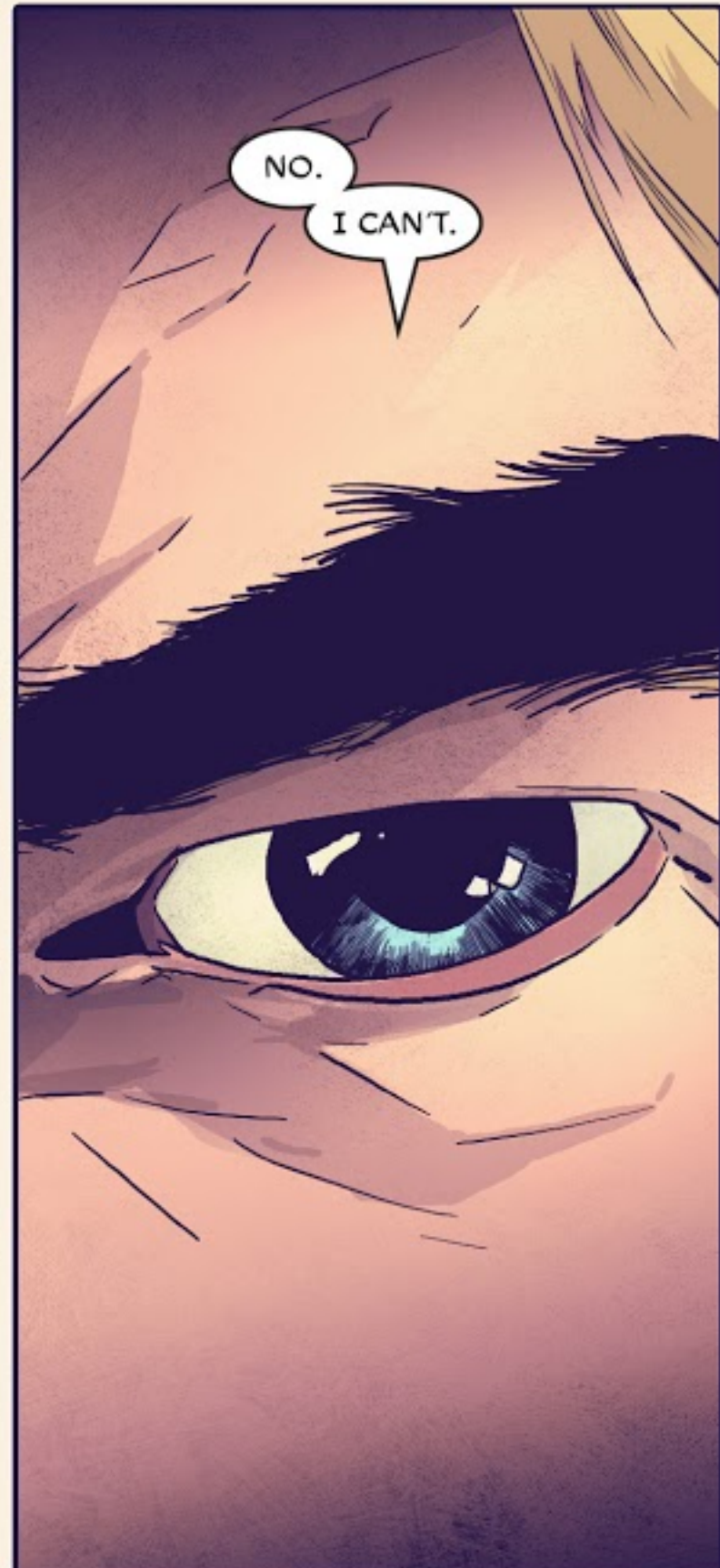
THIS PICTURE JUST REMINDS ME OF THAT UGLY PAST. ONE I DON'T PLAN ON VISITING EVER AGAIN.



RIPPP



"I THINK THE TRUTH DENTED HIS SOUL THAT VERY MOMENT. EVERYTHING WAS ABOUT TO CHANGE AND MARC KNEW IT."





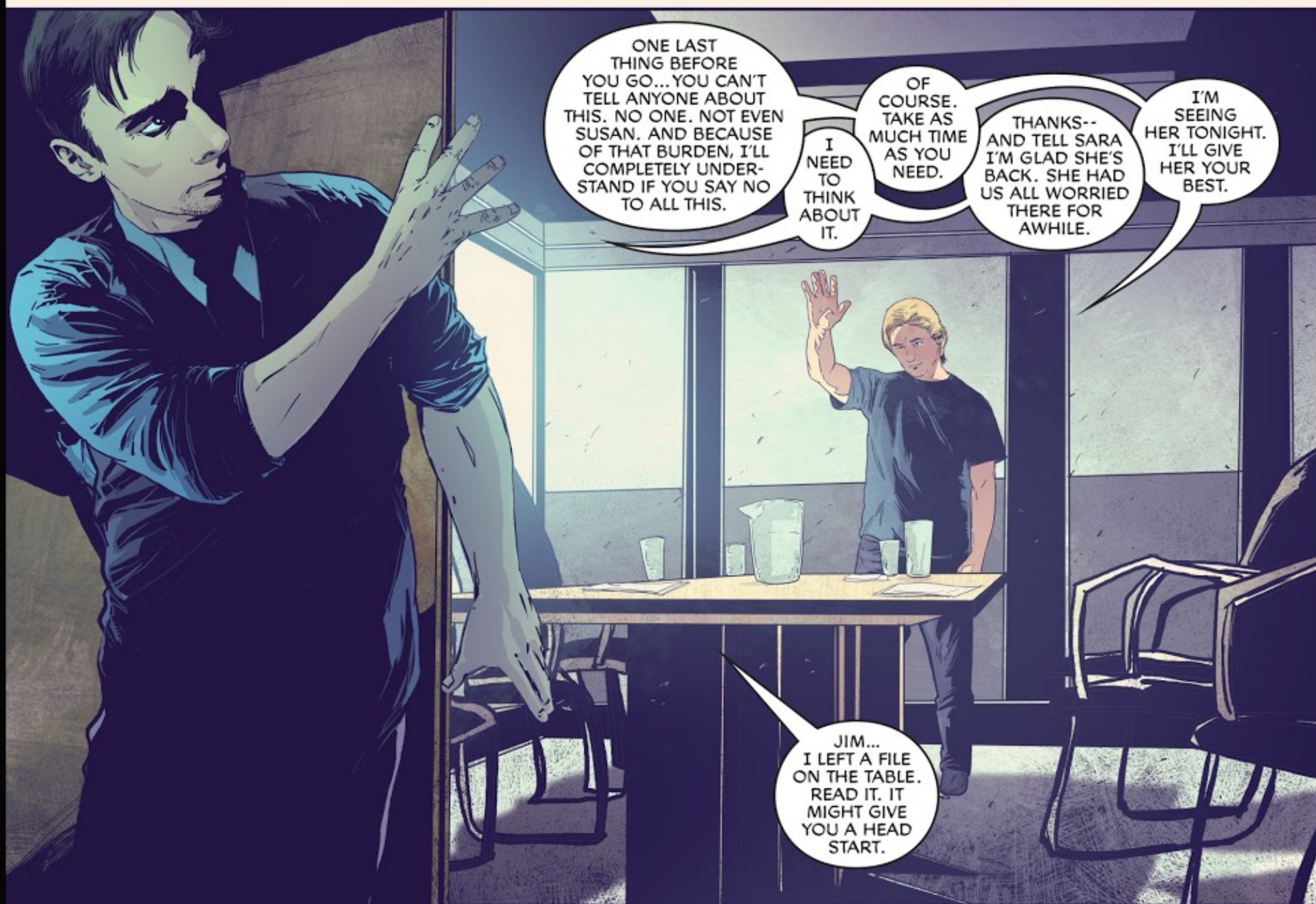
BUT IF YOU TELL THEM I'VE ALREADY ELIMINATED JASON WYNN THAT SHOULD SCARE HALF OF THEM AWAY.

AND THE OTHER HALF?



LET THEM KNOW THAT IF THEY EVER TOUCH YOU I'LL KILL THEM ALL.

NONE OF THEM HAVE SEEN THE POWERS I'M CAPABLE OF.



ONE LAST THING BEFORE YOU GO... YOU CAN'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT THIS. NO ONE. NOT EVEN SUSAN. AND BECAUSE OF THAT BURDEN, I'LL COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND IF YOU SAY NO TO ALL THIS.

I NEED TO THINK ABOUT IT.

OF COURSE. TAKE AS MUCH TIME AS YOU NEED.

THANKS-- AND TELL SARA I'M GLAD SHE'S BACK. SHE HAD US ALL WORRIED THERE FOR AWHILE.

I'M SEEING HER TONIGHT. I'LL GIVE HER YOUR BEST.

JIM... I LEFT A FILE ON THE TABLE. READ IT. IT MIGHT GIVE YOU A HEAD START.



Seven and a Half Hours Ago.



KOFF

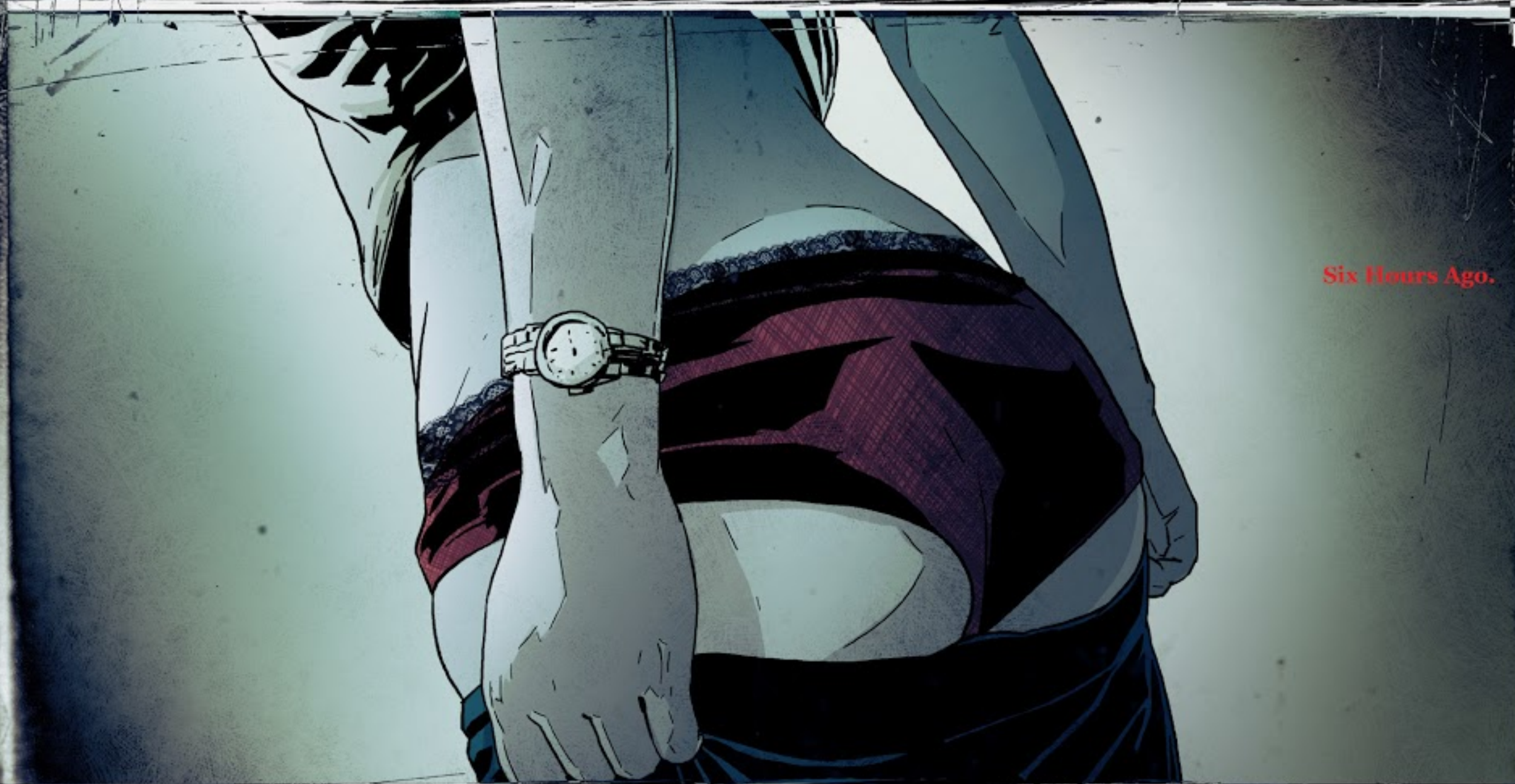
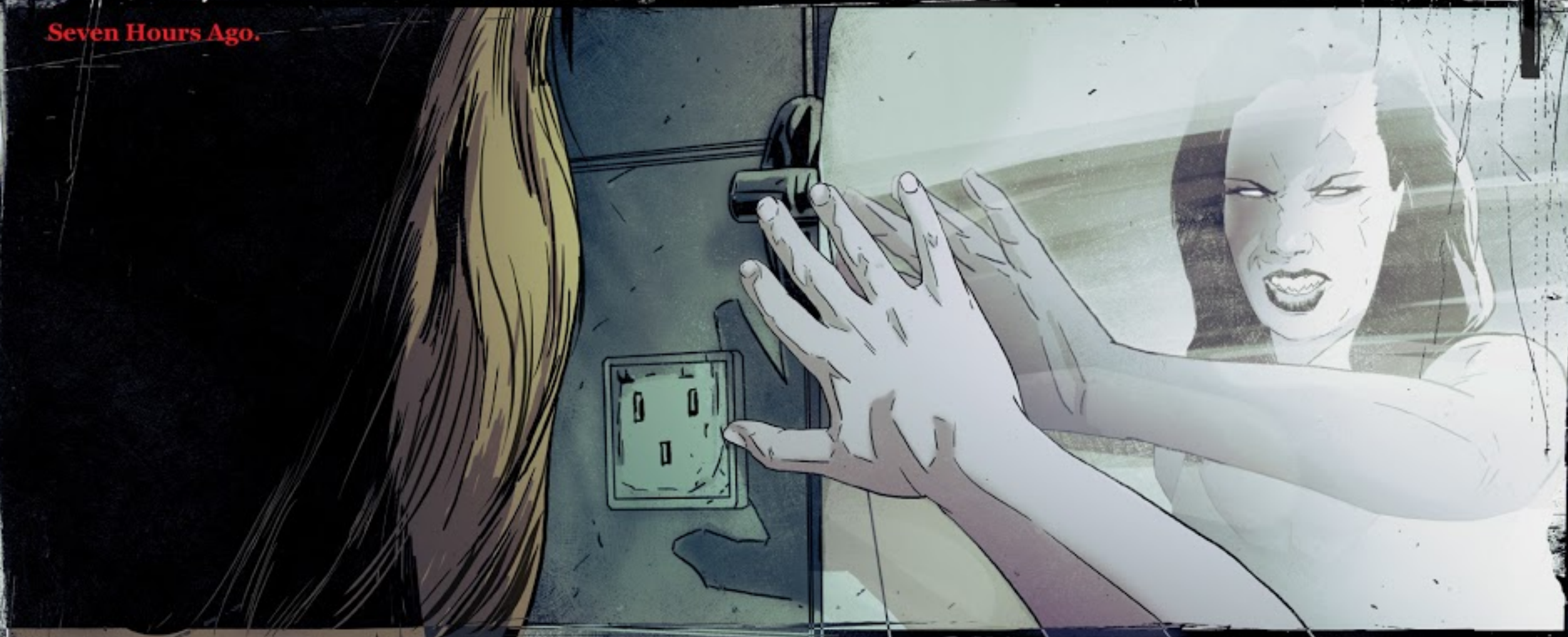
KOFF

KOFF
KOFF

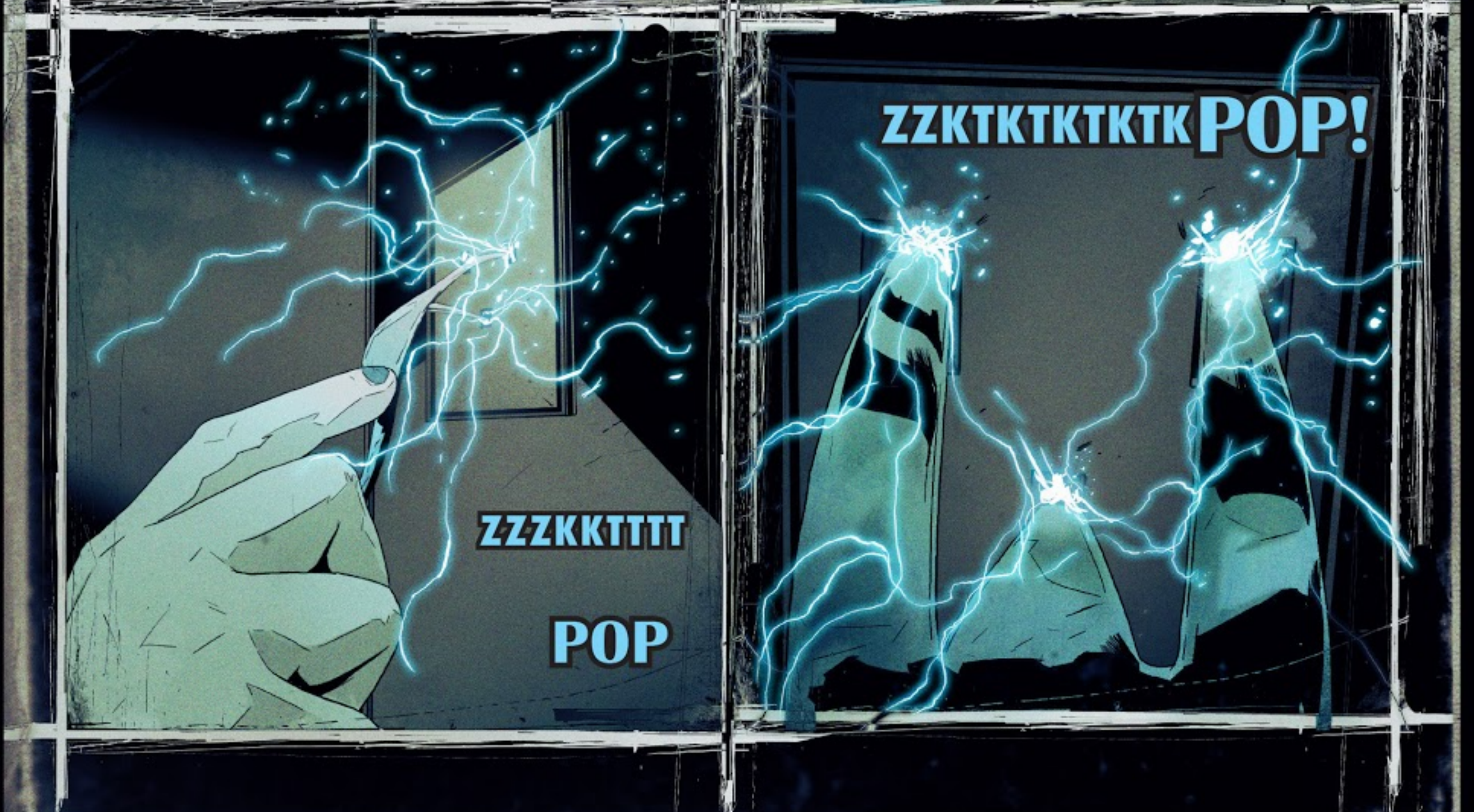
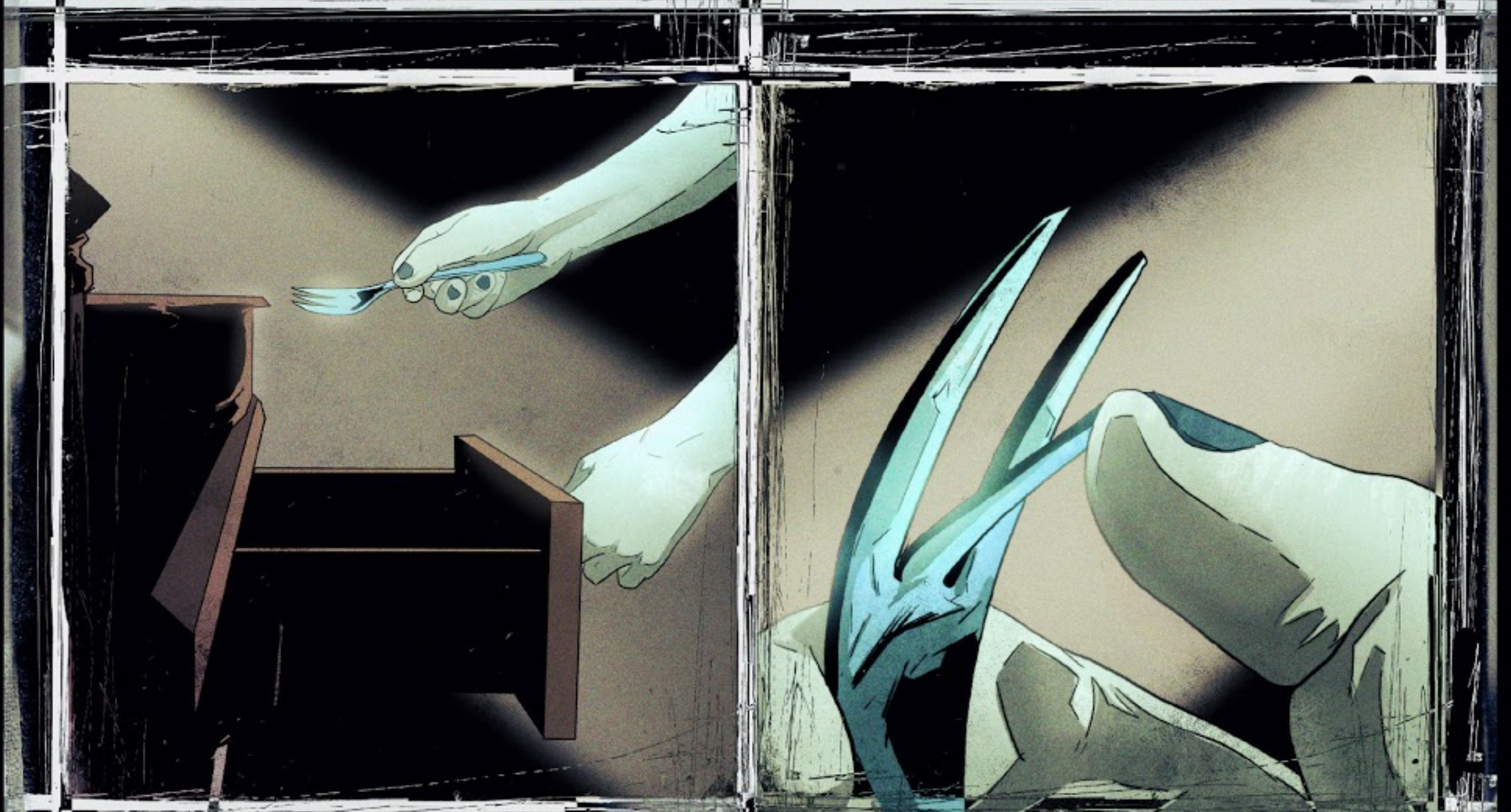
GASP

KOFF

Seven Hours Ago.



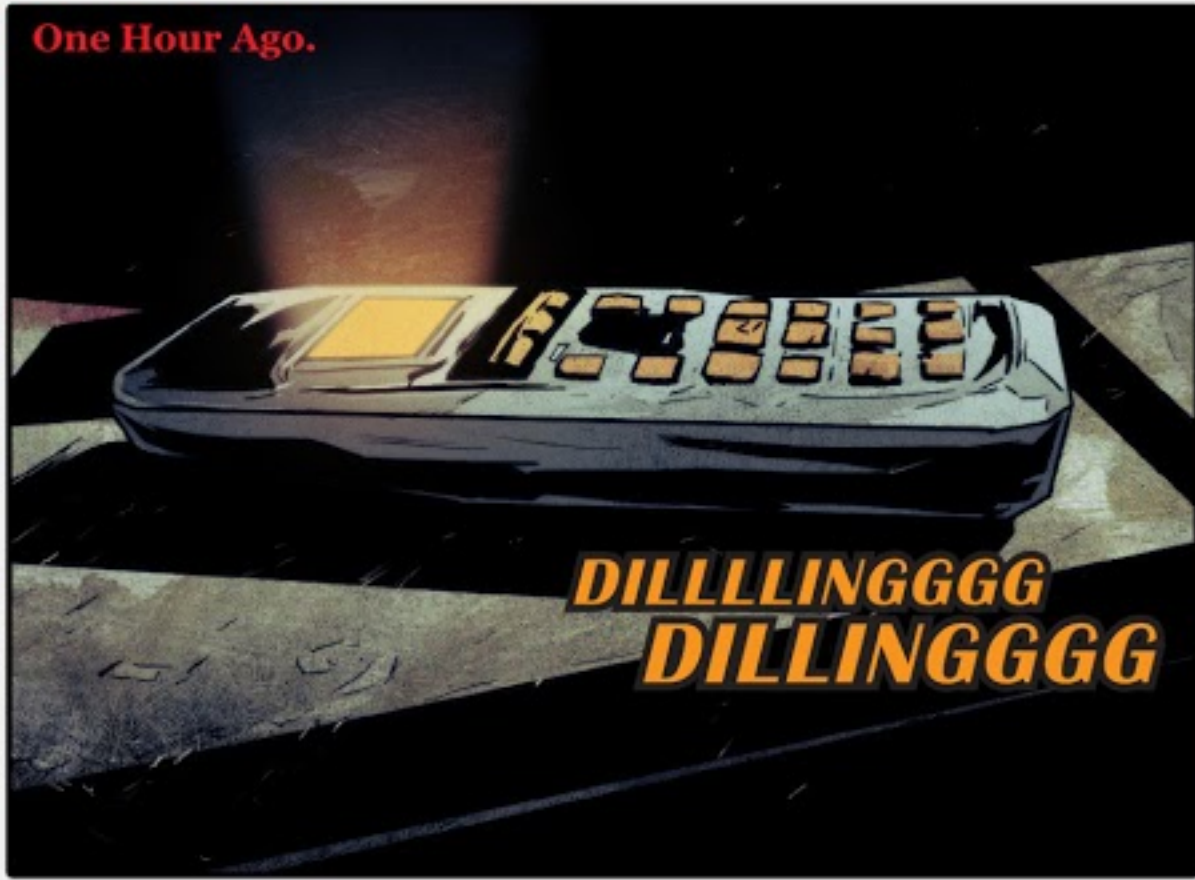
Six Hours Ago.



Five Hours Ago.



One Hour Ago.







SARA?



TEK



YOU HOME?



NOW!

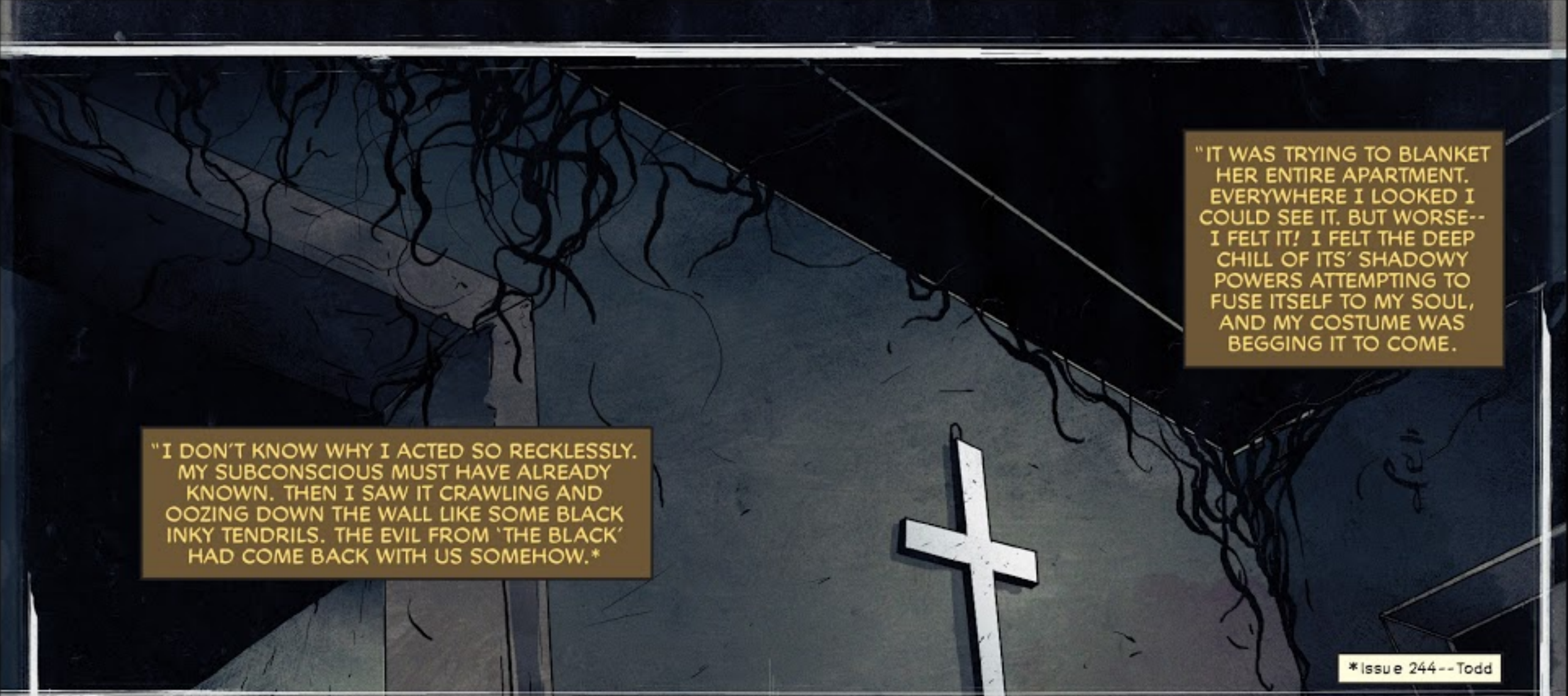
DIEEEEEEEEEEE

SARA!...



SMASH

WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!



"I DON'T KNOW WHY I ACTED SO RECKLESSLY. MY SUBCONSCIOUS MUST HAVE ALREADY KNOWN. THEN I SAW IT CRAWLING AND OOZING DOWN THE WALL LIKE SOME BLACK INKY TENDRILS. THE EVIL FROM 'THE BLACK' HAD COME BACK WITH US SOMEHOW.*

"IT WAS TRYING TO BLANKET HER ENTIRE APARTMENT. EVERYWHERE I LOOKED I COULD SEE IT. BUT WORSE-- I FELT IT! I FELT THE DEEP CHILL OF ITS' SHADOWY POWERS ATTEMPTING TO FUSE ITSELF TO MY SOUL, AND MY COSTUME WAS BEGGING IT TO COME.

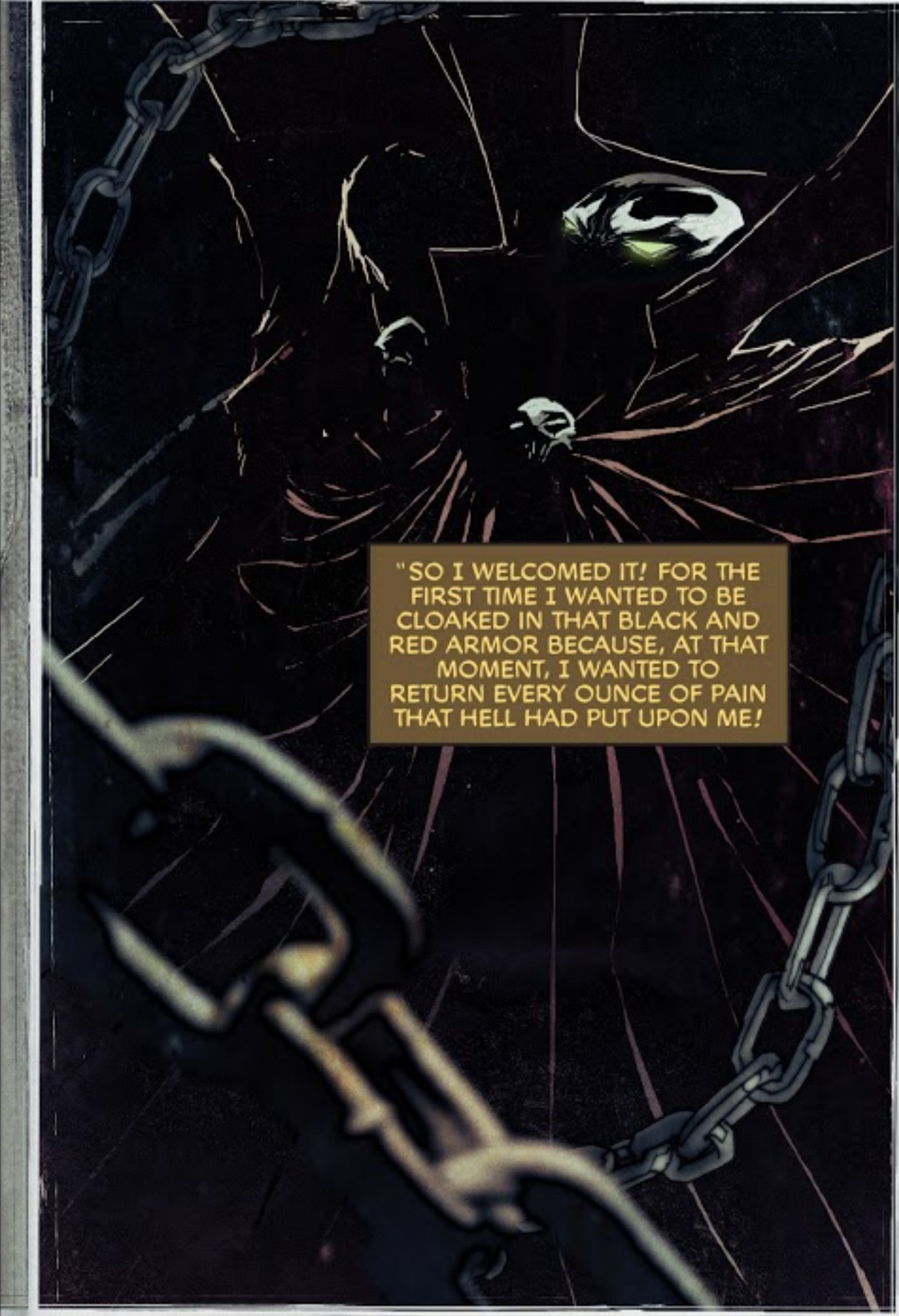
*Issue 244--Todd



"THAT WASN'T GOING TO HAPPEN! I HADN'T FORGOTTEN WHAT COGLIOSTRO SAID...



IF YOU BRING THE COSTUME ON FIRST, IT CAN'T HARM YOU. IF IT COMES WITHOUT YOUR BLESSING-- IT'LL TRY TO DESTROY YOU. YOU MUST MASTER IT! CONTROL IT!



"SO I WELCOMED IT! FOR THE FIRST TIME I WANTED TO BE CLOAKED IN THAT BLACK AND RED ARMOR BECAUSE, AT THAT MOMENT, I WANTED TO RETURN EVERY OUNCE OF PAIN THAT HELL HAD PUT UPON ME!



"THEY WERE NOT GOING TO DO THIS TO SARA! THEY MAY HAVE TAKEN HER BODY, BUT GOD DAMN IT THEY WEREN'T GETTING HER SOUL!"



"NO MATTER HOW
MUCH THEY WANTED IT
OR WANTED ME..."

"TONIGHT THEY WERE
GETTING NOTHING!"



SLURK

NO!

TINK



TRY IT!
GO
AHEAD...!

"I'D RATHER SEE HER
DEAD BEFORE MAKING
HER ENDURE THAT
DARKNESS AGAIN!"



YOU
MAKE A
MOVE AND I'LL
KILL YOU
RIGHT HERE!!

YOU
HEAR
ME, SARA?!
I'LL GUT YOU
BEFORE
YOU EVEN
MOVE!

"BECAUSE THIS 'THING'
IN FRONT OF ME WASN'T
SARA! IT WASN'T!!"

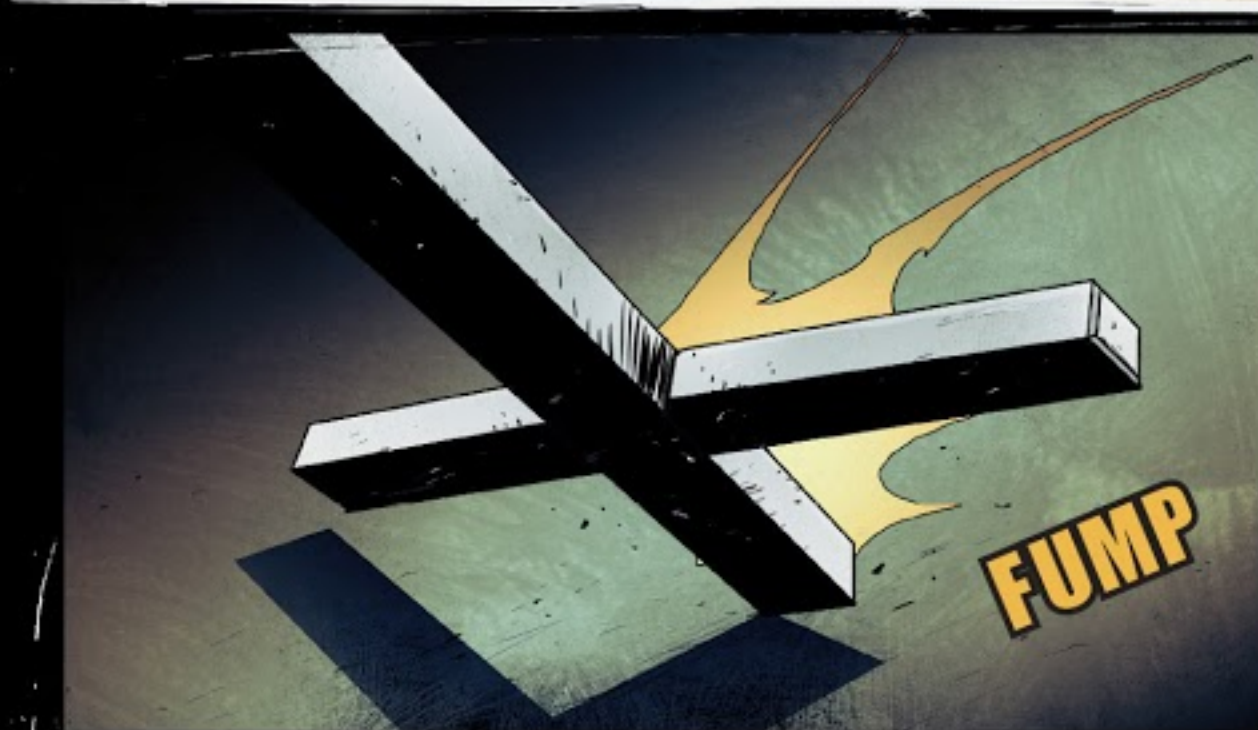


NOOOO!

TAKE ME!
DO YOU HEAR!?
TAKE ME! JUST
LEAVE HER
ALONE!



THUNK



FUMP



LET HER
GO!... OR I
SWEAR I'LL F*CKIN'
UNLEASH THE
WRATH OF GOD
ON YOU!





SPAWN



WEEE-000 WEEE-000 WEEE-000 WEEE-000

E.M.S.
UNIT 34--
WHAT IS YOUR
E.T.A.?

ARRIVAL IN
APPROXIMATELY
9 MINUTES.

ANY SPECIAL
INSTRUCTIONS?

MAY NEED
AN O.R. ON
STANDBY.

ROGER.
WILL TRY TO
FACILITATE.

DO YOU
HAVE INFO
ON PATIENT
YET?

TALKING
TO POLICE ON THE
OTHER LINE. ONE OF
THEIR SQUAD CARS IS
CARRYING THE PERSON
WHO FOUND THE FEMALE.
GATHERING HER DATA
NOW. SHOULD HAVE
IT BY THE TIME WE
PULL IN.

THANK
YOU. STAFF
IS ON
ALERT.



YOU'VE BEEN PRETTY QUIET BACK THERE. YOU ALRIGHT?

YEAH. JUST THINKING TO MYSELF. YOU SURE YOU KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING?



THEY RADIOED THE DESTINATION. BUT I GET YOUR CONCERN. THIS MUST BE TOUGH ON YOU.

THE HOSPITAL? HOW FAR AWAY IS IT?

ABOUT TEN MINUTES. THE AMBULANCE SHOULD BE THERE ALREADY BY THE TIME WE PULL UP.

YOU THINK SHE'S GOING TO BE OKAY?



LOOK, I'VE BEEN TO DOZENS OF THESE 911 CALLS. MOST OF THE TIME IT SEEMS MUCH WORSE AT THE START. EMOTIONS ARE RUNNING HIGH, JUST LIKE YOURS ARE. BUT ONCE EVERYONE CATCHES THEIR BREATH, MOST OF THE TIME EVERYBODY'S JUST FINE.

THANKS.

THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR. BUT THIS ONE MAY BE A BIT MORE COMPLICATED THAN WHAT YOU'RE USED TO.

THEN TELL THE DOCTORS WHAT YOU KNOW. THEY'LL GIVE HER THE BEST TREATMENT THEY CAN, MR. DOWNING. BESIDES, WITH THE AMOUNT OF GOOD DEEDS YOU'VE BEEN DOING... I'LL BET THE ENTIRE STAFF THERE WILL BEND OVER BACKWARDS.



"MY WIFE SAYS YOU'RE A 'MIRACLE WORKER.' DOCTORS AND NURSES LIKE IT WHEN THEY MEET PEOPLE IN THE SAME BUSINESS THEY ARE. SO HOLD ON TIGHT. THE SQUAD CAR FOLLOWING THE AMBULANCE SAYS TRAFFIC'S PRETTY LIGHT..."

"WE SHOULD ONLY BE A FEW MINUTES BEHIND THEM."





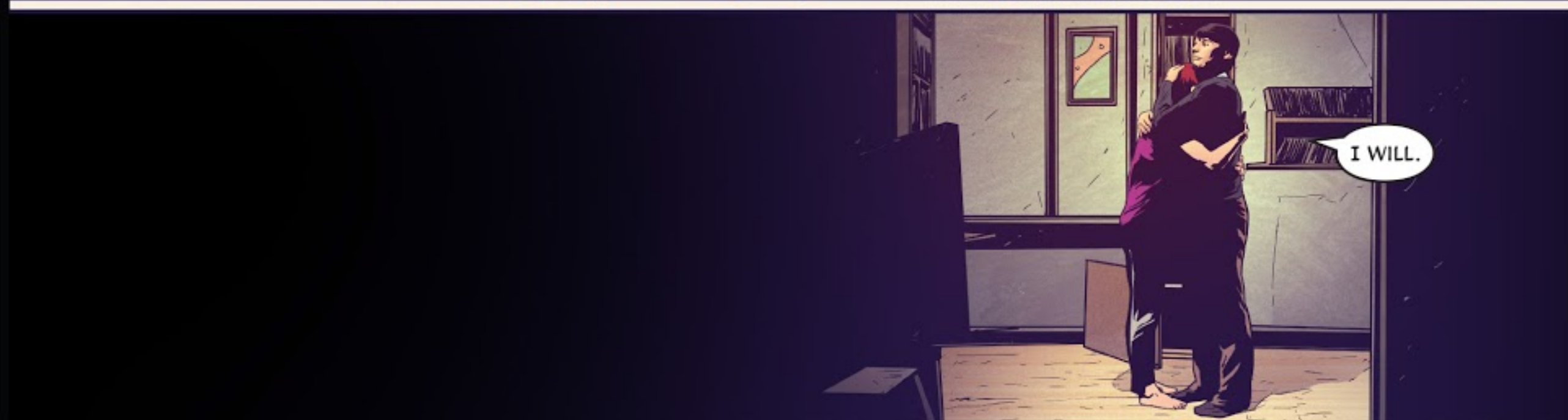
I DON'T KNOW WHAT CONDITION SARA IS IN, OR HOW BADLY SHE'S HURT. BUT JIM IS GOING TO NEED TO KNOW EVERY AVAILABLE OPTION WE CAN GIVE HIM TO MAKE SURE THIS DOESN'T TURN INTO A CIRCUS. BECAUSE YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO, THEY'D FOLLOW YOU WHEREVER YOU AND I GO ONCE WE SHOW UP.

I NEED ONE OF US OUTSIDE THAT MADNESS.



YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S THE SMART THING TO DO.

I... I JUST WANTED TO BE THERE TO SUPPORT THEM. LET THEM BOTH KNOW I'M THINKING OF THEM.



I WILL.



MAYBE LATER IN THE DAY YOU CAN COME OVER.

KEEP ME UPDATED AS MUCH AS YOU CAN.

I'LL CALL AS SOON AS I KNOW ANYTHING. IN THE MEANTIME, CALL THE FOUNDATION'S STAFF--LET THEM KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING. THEN GET OUR P.R. FIRM READY TO GO. TELL THEM WE MIGHT NEED THEIR HELP TOO. JIM'S USED TO ALL THIS, BUT SARA... I'M NOT CONFIDENT IN HER COPING ABILITY LATELY.

I'M ON IT.



...AND THIS JUST IN... A WOMAN BELIEVED TO BE SARA JOHNSTON, THE FEMALE FREQUENTLY SEEN AT THE SIDE OF JIM DOWNING, HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN RUSHED TO MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL. REASONS FOR THIS RUSH HOUR AMBULANCE RIDE HAVE YET TO BE DETERMINED, THOUGH OUR EARLY REPORT SAYS SHE ARRIVED WITH UNSPECIFIED INJURIES OR ILLNESS. THERE IS NO WORD AS TO WHETHER SHE ENTERED OR EXITED THE AMBULANCE UNDER HER OWN POWER.

MS. JOHNSTON HAS BEEN A STEADY TOPIC OF SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER, BASED ON THE POSSIBILITY THAT SHE'S IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH CONTROVERSIAL NEW CELEBRITY, JIM DOWNING. AS SOME OF YOU MAY RECALL, SHE WAS THE WOMAN CAUGHT ON CAMERA IMPLORING DOWNING TO INTERVENE WHEN A JOURNALIST WAS ACCIDENTLY STRUCK BY A BUS NEAR WHERE THEY WERE STANDING.

IN THAT INCIDENT, DOWNING, FOR THE FIRST TIME, USED HIS MYSTERIOUS HEALING POWERS IN FULL PUBLIC VIEW. SINCE THEN, HE HAS BEEN HOUNDED BY THE MEDIA, INCLUDING OUR OWN REPORTERS, AS WE HAVE ALL BEEN SEARCHING FOR CLUES TO HIS PAST.



THE RAMUS CORPORATION, WITH THE HELP OF SOME CITY OFFICIALS, QUICKLY HELPED FORM A NEW FOUNDATION THAT MR. DOWNING INTENDED TO USE AS THE CENTER FOR ADMINISTERING HIS UNUSUAL POWERS OF HEALING. BUT SOON AFTER CONSTRUCTION BEGAN, DOWNING BECAME ELUSIVE TOWARD THE PRESS. THOUGH HE HAS BEEN OUT AND AROUND TOWN, HE SEEMS TO APPEAR OUT OF NOWHERE EACH TIME. SOURCES SAY THIS IS DUE TO A STRICT SECURITY BLANKET PUT AROUND HIM BY MR. RAMUS.

IT WAS PRECISELY DOWNING'S LACK OF ACCESS THAT LED SOME REPORTERS TO FOCUS ON THOSE CLOSE TO HIM, IN HOPE THAT THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO SHED SOME LIGHT ON HIS CURRENT ACTIVITIES. FOUNDATION SPOKESMAN, MARC ROSEN, HAS, FOR THE MOST PART, GIVEN SCRIPTED NON-ANSWERS. SO, MISS JOHNSTON BECAME A TARGET FOR MANY IN THE MEDIA. SOME SAY SHE IS DOWNING'S GIRLFRIEND, WHILE OTHERS SAY THEY MERELY HAVE A STRONG FRIENDSHIP, GIVEN THAT SHE WAS HIS BEDSIDE NURSE FOR THE YEARS HE WAS COMATOSE.



THIS IS ABSURD!! I'VE BEEN TELLING YOU FOR MONTHS NOW THAT JIM DOWNING'S A **FRAUD** AND THIS JUST **CLINCHES** IT! YOU WANT ME TO BELIEVE THAT THIS GUY, WHO'S PRETENDING TO BE A **MESSIAH**-- WITH ALL THESE **VOO-DOO POWERS** TO HEAL EVERY PERSON OF EVERY ALIMENT-- CAN'T FIX THE LADY WHO'S **CLOSEST** TO HIM? **GIVE ME A BREAK!**

WHAT'S THE USE OF **HAVING** THOSE POWERS IF YOU CAN'T USE THEM ON YOUR FRIENDS OR FAMILY?! SO, NOW WE'RE TOLD TO UNDERSTAND THAT HE CAN FIX EVERYONE **EXCEPT** HIS FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES. REALLY, FOLKS, THIS IS GETTING RIDICULOUS! MAYBE THE REASON HE CAN'T CURE HER OR HEAL HER, OR WHATEVER HE SUPPOSEDLY DOES, IS BE CAUSE **HE'S A FAKE!!** A **CHARLATAN!** A **CON MAN!** I CAN'T BE THE **ONLY** ONE WHO SEES THIS FOR A BLATANT HOAX-- **CAN I?**

IT'S TIME FOR YOU GOOD FOLKS TO **TAKE OFF** YOUR ROSE COLORED GLASSES AND PUT ON YOUR T-SHIRT THAT SAYS '**MY NAME IS TUCKER... NOT SUCKER!**' THEY'RE AVAILABLE AT MY WEBSITE.



E.R. WE HAVE
A 31 YEAR OLD
FEMALE. UNCONSCIOUS.
NOT CURRENTLY TAKING
ANY MEDICATIONS.
DRIVING UP TO THE
LOBBY NOW.

WE'VE
ALREADY
PREPPED A
ROOM AND THE
DOCTORS ARE
WAITING.



WHAT'S
HER
PRESSURE?

200 WHEN
WE ARRIVED.
SITTING AT
170 NOW.

ANY SIGNS
OF SERIOUS
INJURIES?

NO.
SOME BODY
CONTUSIONS
AND A FEW MINOR
LACERATIONS ON THE
BACK AND AROUND
THE NECK AREA, BUT
NO INDICATIONS OF
ANY INTERNAL
RUPTURES.

WHAT INFO
DO WE HAVE
AS TO WHAT
HAPPENED?

THE POLICE
AREN'T SAYING,
BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE
THE BOYFRIEND
FOUND HER IN THIS
CONDITION.



BLOOD
FLOW SEEMS
STABLE, BUT SHE'S
SUFFERING FROM
TRAUMATIC SHOCK
AT THE LEAST. WE
NEED TO GET HER
UP TO C.T. AND
DO A SCAN.

YOU
WANT A
FULL BODY
M.R.I.?

YES--
JUST TO BE
SAFE. BUT
I WANT SOME
QUICK BLOOD
SAMPLES
FIRST.



DID YOU
HEAR SHE HAS
SOMETHING TO
DO WITH THAT
DOWNING GUY
FROM TV?

SO
THEY TELL
ME.



WHEN
HE SHOWS,
TELL THE
NURSES
I MAY NEED
TO TALK TO
HIM.



FLUIDS DONE.

THEN LET'S MOVE HER.

READY...

BRACE!



PUPILS SLIGHTLY DILATED.



JOHNSTON. I'M LOOKING FOR SARA JOHNSTON. SHE JUST CAME IN!



EXCUSE ME! A PATIENT JUST CAME IN. A YOUNG FEMALE, DID YOU SEE HER?

I THINK THE RECEPTIONIST IS CHECKING ON IT ALREADY.



VITALS ARE STABILIZED, BUT SHE'S STILL UNRESPONSIVE.



MR. DOWNING-- PLEASE, SIR. YOU NEED TO SLOW DOWN. I'LL GET WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.

THANKS, OFFICER. SORRY ABOUT THAT.



25 MINUTES LATER.

MR. ROSEN!

MR. ROSEN!

IS IT TRUE THAT DOWNING'S GIRLFRIEND WAS...

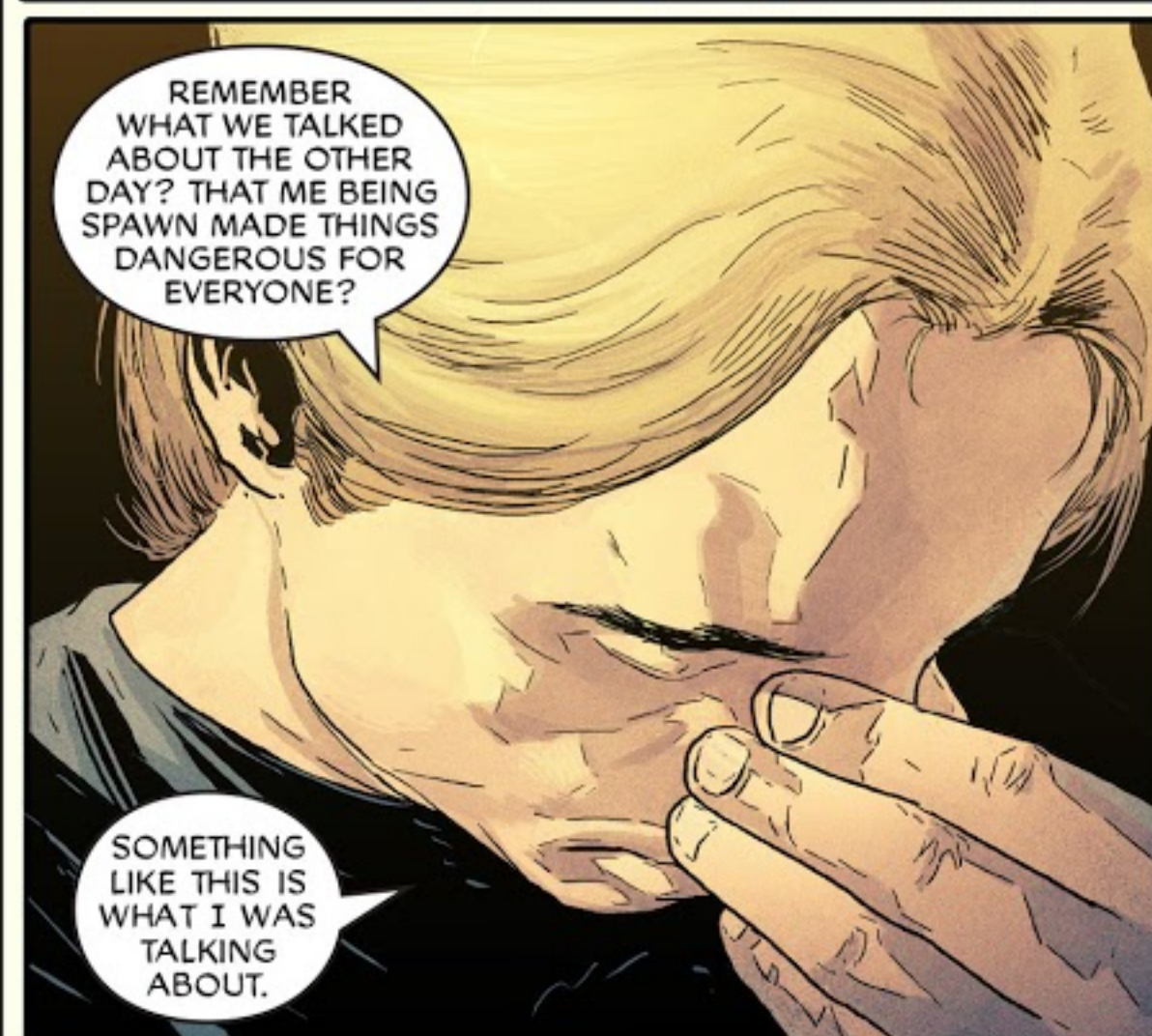
CLIK

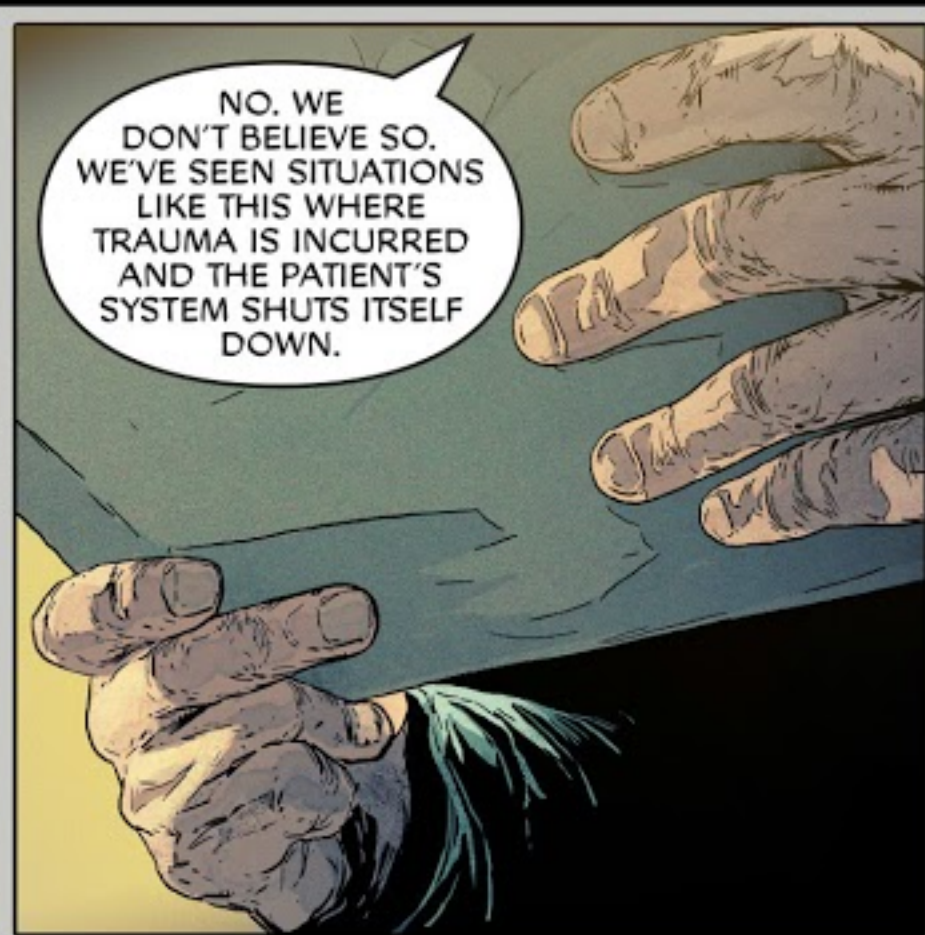
CLIK

CLIK

WHY DIDN'T HE JUST HEAL HER?

MARC...?







I KNOW YOU HAVE YOUR RULES. I'M NOT TRYING TO GET ANYONE IN TROUBLE-- BUT IS THERE ANY WAY...

YOU WANT TO SEE HER, DON'T YOU?

I THINK I CAN MAKE THAT HAPPEN, BUT ONLY FOR A FEW MINUTES.

WHEN YOU'RE DONE, COME FIND ME IN MY OFFICE.



15 Minutes Later.

AS HARD AS ALL OF THIS HAS BEEN, MR. DOWNING, I THINK WE SHOULD ALL BE AS HONEST AS POSSIBLE WITH EACH OTHER. YOUR FRIEND, SARA, IS SUFFERING FROM AN ACUTE ATTACK TO HER IMMUNE SYSTEM. IT'S A BIOLOGICAL STRAIN THAT ISN'T NORMALLY FOUND IN HUMANS... IN FACT FROM OUR OBSERVATIONS IT HAS TO BE 'PLANTED' IN A BODY. EVEN THEN IT CAN ONLY TAKE HOLD IF A PRIOR TRIGGER WAS RELEASED. IN ESSENCE, THE ONLY WAY MISS JOHNSTON COULD CONCEIVABLY BE IN THIS CONDITION IS FROM A TWO-FOLD ATTACK.

HER VISIT TO 'THE BLACK' WAS THE ENVIRONMENTAL TRIGGER. BUT YOU HAD SEX WITH HER... THAT'S WHAT REALLY CAUSED ALL OF THIS.

THE FIRST FROM HER ENVIRONMENT, AND THE SECOND IN A MORE PERSONAL FASHION.

I'M NOT QUITE FOLLOWING.

THEN LET ME SEE IF I CAN MAKE THIS A BIT CLEARER.



WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?



Elsewhere.



Later.





HEL...

IT'S
TIME.

TIME
FOR YOU TO
BECOME AS
POWERFUL AS
YOU COULD
EVER
WANT!



BECAUSE
YOUR FRIEND,
SARA-- I
THOUGHT SHE
WAS A 'GOOD
GIRL.'

BUT SHE
SPREAD HER LEGS
AS EASY AS YOU DID
FOR DOWNING. THAT
WASN'T SUPPOSED
TO HAPPEN. NOT
THIS WAY!

WHAT'S
THE BIG DEAL?
YOU JEALOUS OR
SOMETHING?

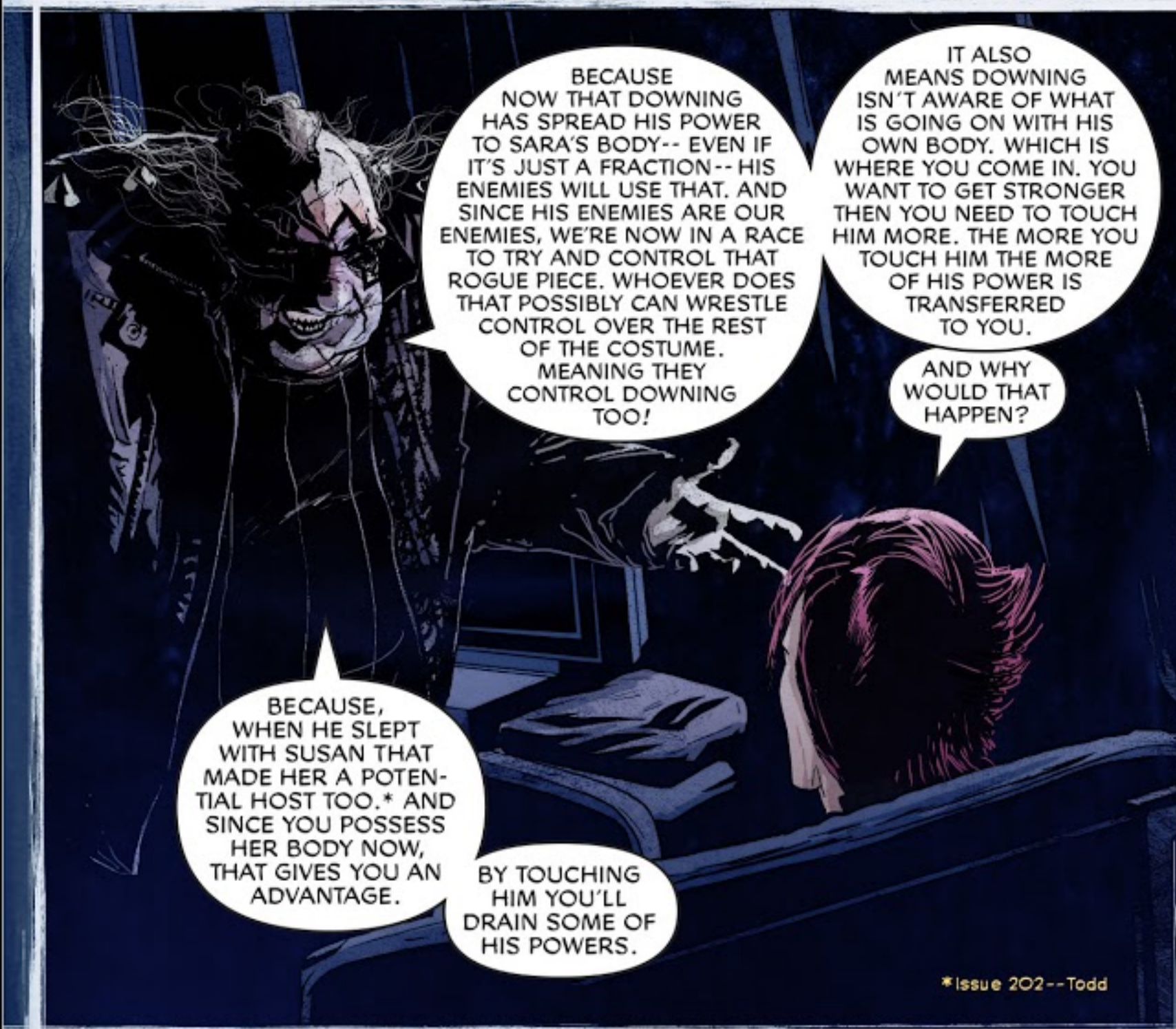


I'M NOT
JEALOUS. I'M
CONCERNED!
AND SO SHOULD
YOU BE. DOWNING
HAS INADVERTENTLY
EXPOSED HIMSELF
BY LETTING THE
COSTUME SEEP
INTO SOMEONE
ELSE.

SO,
YOU'RE
GOING TO
DO ME A
FAVOR.



WHETHER
YOU WANT TO
OR NOT.



BECAUSE
NOW THAT DOWNING
HAS SPREAD HIS POWER
TO SARA'S BODY-- EVEN IF
IT'S JUST A FRACTION-- HIS
ENEMIES WILL USE THAT. AND
SINCE HIS ENEMIES ARE OUR
ENEMIES, WE'RE NOW IN A RACE
TO TRY AND CONTROL THAT
ROGUE PIECE. WHOEVER DOES
THAT POSSIBLY CAN WRESTLE
CONTROL OVER THE REST
OF THE COSTUME.
MEANING THEY
CONTROL DOWNING
TOO!

IT ALSO
MEANS DOWNING
ISN'T AWARE OF WHAT
IS GOING ON WITH HIS
OWN BODY. WHICH IS
WHERE YOU COME IN. YOU
WANT TO GET STRONGER
THEN YOU NEED TO TOUCH
HIM MORE. THE MORE YOU
TOUCH HIM THE MORE
OF HIS POWER IS
TRANSFERRED
TO YOU.

AND WHY
WOULD THAT
HAPPEN?

BECAUSE,
WHEN HE SLEPT
WITH SUSAN THAT
MADE HER A POTEN-
TIAL HOST TOO.* AND
SINCE YOU POSSESS
HER BODY NOW,
THAT GIVES YOU AN
ADVANTAGE.

BY TOUCHING
HIM YOU'LL
DRAIN SOME OF
HIS POWERS.

*Issue 202--Todd



HE WON'T
EVEN KNOW IT'S
HAPPENING.



Sara Johnston

BREAKING NEWS



AS WE CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THIS STORY, SARA JOHNSTON, THE FEMALE COMPANION OF JIM DOWNING, HAS REPORTEDLY LAPSED INTO A COMA. DOCTORS AT MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL HAVEN'T CONFIRMED THIS, BUT THEY ARE DUE TO HAVE A SMALL PRESS BRIEFING LATER TONIGHT. SOURCES WHO SPOKE ON CONDITION OF ANONYMITY SAID THAT MS. JOHNSTON DIDN'T APPEAR TO HAVE ANY INJURIES THAT MAY HAVE DIRECTLY CAUSED HER CONDITION. IT IS ALSO UNKNOWN WHETHER SHE WAS FOUND IN THIS STATE, OR SUCCUMBED WHILE AT THE HOSPITAL.

FOR NOW, THE HOSPITAL IS CALLING HER CONDITION 'STABLE,' WITH FURTHER DETAILS TO BE GIVEN AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE. EARLIER TODAY JOHN DOE FOUNDATION SPOKESMAN AND RAMUS INDUSTRIES CHAIRMAN, MATTHEW RAMUS, HAD THESE BRIEF COMMENTS...

SHE'S RESTING PEACEFULLY FOR NOW. DOCTORS SAY THERE ARE NO BODILY INJURIES AND THAT TEST RESULTS, SO FAR, SEEM POSITIVE. OBVIOUSLY, WE'RE HOPING FOR A FULL RECOVERY.

MY ONLY CONCERN IS FOR SARA. I'LL WORRY ABOUT THE FOUNDATION AND MY OTHER BUSINESS INTERESTS LATER.

SO LET ME ASK YOU, DOCTOR. AS IT HAS BEEN REPORTED, IS SHE ACTUALLY IN A COMA? WHAT AMOUNT OF TIME CAN WE EXPECT BEFORE SHE RECOVERS?

FIRST OFF, LET ME SAY, UNLESS SOME UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCE OCCURS, SHE *WILL* WAKE UP. THE POSSIBLE DURATION OF HER COMA IS SOMETHING WE CAN'T CALCULATE, DUE TO THE COMPLEXITY OF THE HUMAN BRAIN. IN MOST CASES THOUGH, THE PATIENT WILL WAKE AND WITHIN A FEW DAYS WILL ACT AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED AT ALL. IN RARE OCCASIONS WE'VE SEEN THAT THERE CAN BE SLIGHT TO EXTREME MEMORY LOSS, WHICH CAN HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON THE MOTOR SKILLS OF THAT PERSON.

IF I UNDERSTAND, THEN, THERE COULD BE SOME PHYSICAL THERAPY INVOLVED UPON WAKING, MORE AS A FUNCTION OF THE BRAIN FORGETTING HOW TO MOVE ITSELF IN A NORMAL FASHION?

ESSENTIALLY, YES.

YOU WALK OUT OF
HERE NOW AND YOU CONDEMN
YOUR GIRLFRIEND TO A SLOW, AGONIZING
DEATH. THAT'S A GUARANTEE. WE'RE HER
ONLY HOPE. THE ONLY ONES THAT KNOW
ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH HER 'SICKNESS'.
SHE'S GOT LESS THAN 48 HOURS BEFORE
HER NERVOUS SYSTEM BEGINS
SHUTTING DOWN.

BUT I
CAN CURE
HER IF YOU'RE
WILLING TO GIVE
ME WHAT I
WANT.

AND WHAT
WOULD
THAT BE?

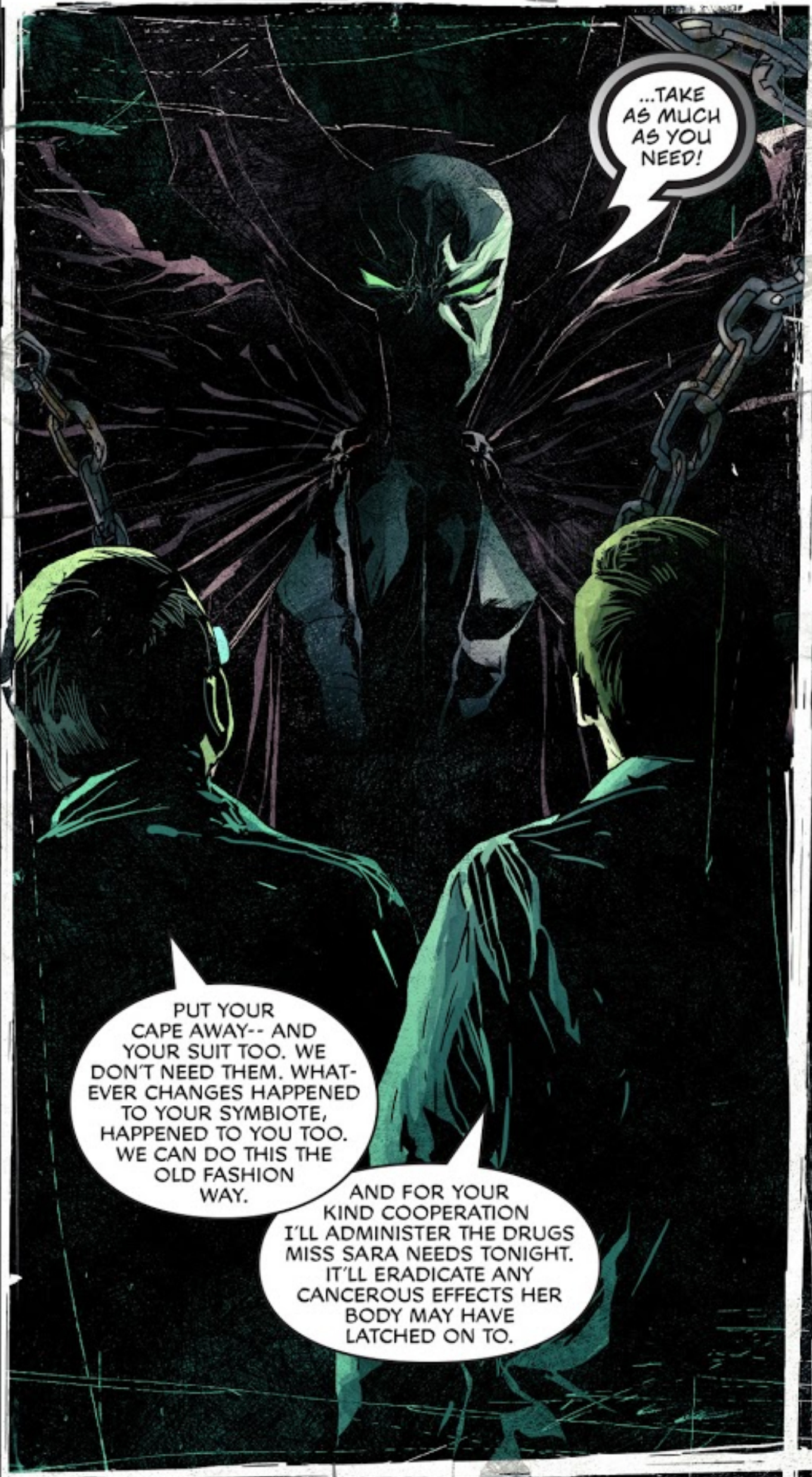
THE ONLY
REAL THING
THAT
MATTERS.

A SAMPLE
OF YOUR
BLOOD.

WHEN YOU
WENT INTO '*THE BLACK*'
TO RESCUE HER, YOUR
SYMBIOTE HAD TO MERGE WITH
THAT DARKNESS. THAT MEANS IT
FUSED WITH THOSE MOLECULES
FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME. I
WANT A SAMPLE OF WHAT
THAT LOOKS LIKE.

OR MORE
SPECIFICALLY,
MR. RAMUS WANTS
A SAMPLE OF
WHAT THAT
LOOKS LIKE.

THEN
TAKE
IT...



...TAKE AS MUCH AS YOU NEED!

PUT YOUR CAPE AWAY-- AND YOUR SUIT TOO. WE DON'T NEED THEM. WHATEVER CHANGES HAPPENED TO YOUR SYMBIOTE, HAPPENED TO YOU TOO. WE CAN DO THIS THE OLD FASHION WAY.

AND FOR YOUR KIND COOPERATION I'LL ADMINISTER THE DRUGS MISS SARA NEEDS TONIGHT. IT'LL ERADICATE ANY CANCEROUS EFFECTS HER BODY MAY HAVE LATCHED ON TO.



HOW LONG WILL SHE BE IN HER COMA?

THAT WE DON'T KNOW. BUT, AT LEAST SHE'LL BE HEALTHY WHEN SHE DOES COME OUT OF IT.



WE'RE DONE HERE.

YOU KNOW WHERE I'LL BE.



WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT? RAMUS IS GOING TO BE VERY PLEASED.



**KNOCK
KNOCK**

JIM...?
CAN WE
COME
IN?

OF
COURSE.

THANKS.
SORRY ABOUT
MY OUTBURST
EARLIER. I WENT
THROUGH THIS
WITH MY DAD
YEARS AGO.



DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT IT. YOUR
HEART WAS IN
THE RIGHT
SPOT.

SUSAN'S
HERE TOO. SHE
WANTED TO GIVE
HER SUPPORT IN
PERSON.



THERE.
THERE.

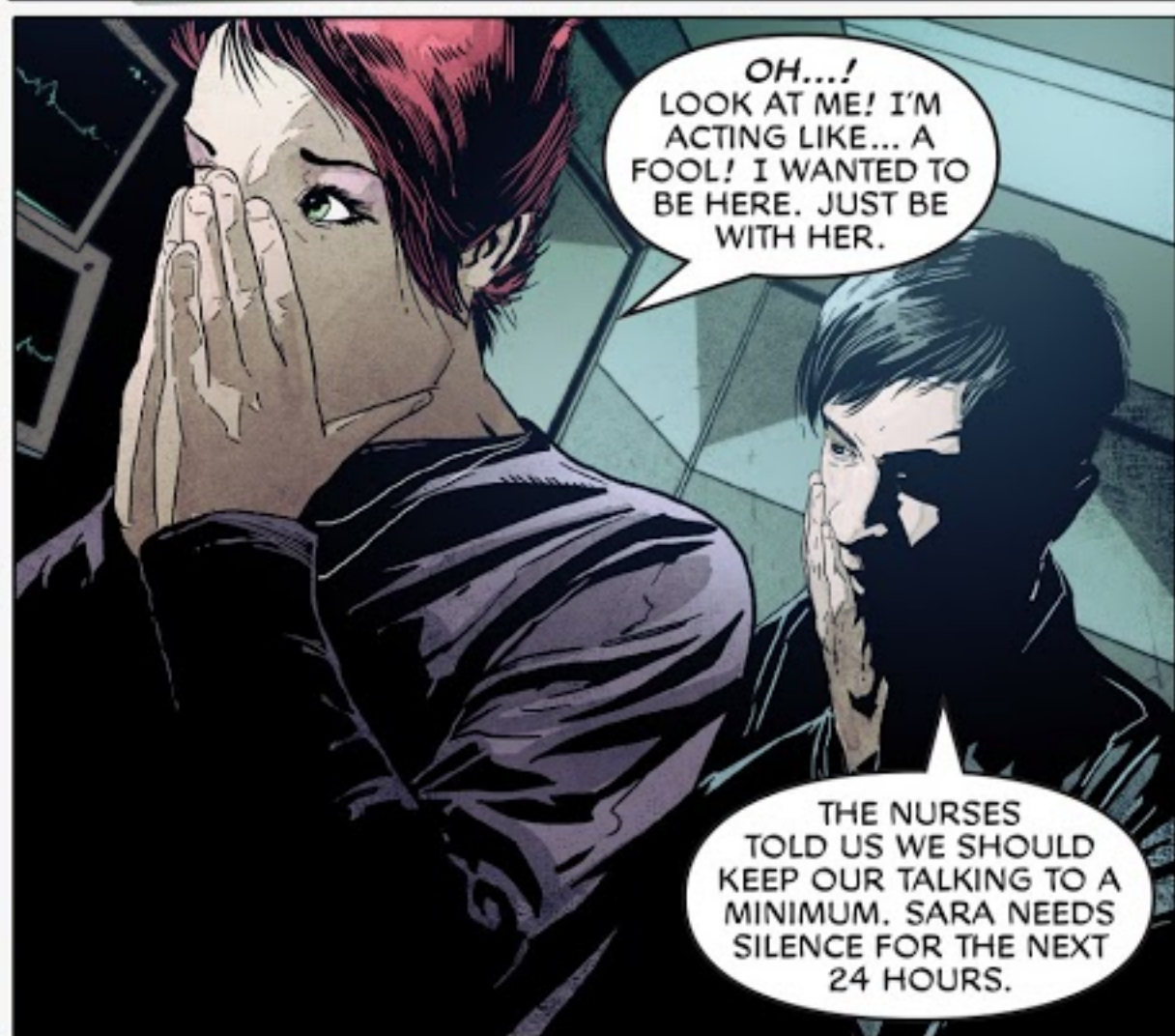
SHE'S
GOING TO BE
FINE. WE JUST
NEED TO BE PATIENT
AND LET THIS
THING RUN ITS
COURSE.

I... I
JUST CAN'T
BELIEVE IT.
TELL ME SHE'S
GOING TO BE
OKAY, JIM.
PLEASE.

THANKS
FOR HOLDING
DOWN THE FORT
TODAY. HOW
YOU HOLDING
UP?



I'M FINE.
JUST... HOLD
ME A BIT
LONGER.



OH...!
LOOK AT ME! I'M
ACTING LIKE... A
FOOL! I WANTED TO
BE HERE. JUST BE
WITH HER.

THE NURSES
TOLD US WE SHOULD
KEEP OUR TALKING TO A
MINIMUM. SARA NEEDS
SILENCE FOR THE NEXT
24 HOURS.



SARA...

If you
can hear me...
I need you to
come back. Do that
and I promise
I'll make all this
evil go away
forever.



image

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DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN

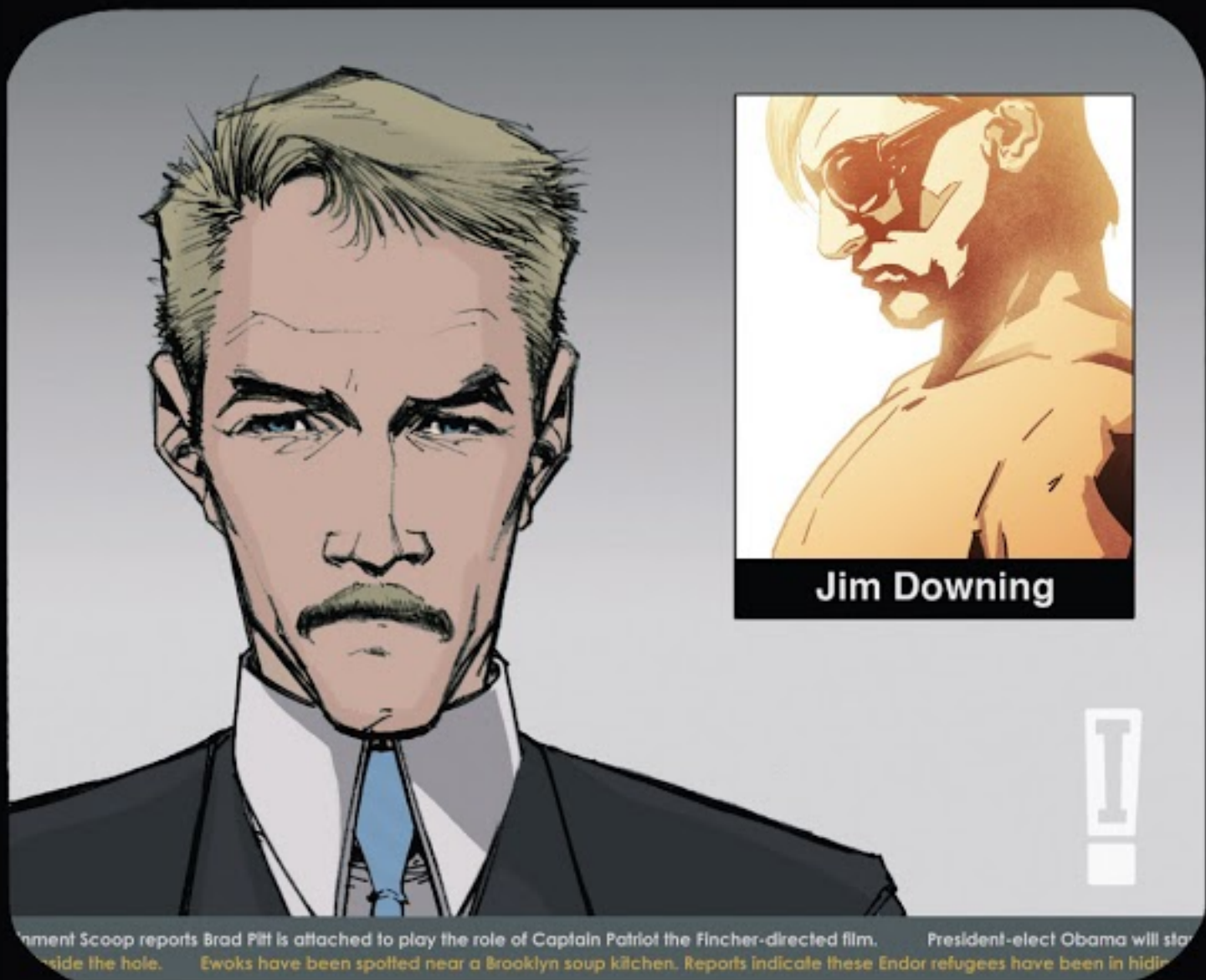


Kudranski
McFARLANE



SO FAR, HOSPITAL OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN UNWILLING TO SHARE ANY DETAILS OF MS. JOHNSTON'S CURRENT HEALTH CONDITIONS. SPECULATION HAS CONTINUED TO GROW THAT THE ISOLATION THEY HAVE PUT HER IN, MAY PERHAPS HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE RECENT EBOLA CRISIS THAT HAS MANY HOSPITAL WORKERS CONCERNED ABOUT ITS CONTAINMENT. SOME UNOFFICIAL SOURCES HAVE DENIED THOSE RUMORS AS "CATEGORICALLY FALSE", CLAIMING THAT MS. JOHNSTON IS INSTEAD SUFFERING FROM SOME SEVERE FORM OF SHOCK, THOUGH WE'VE BEEN UNABLE TO VERIFY ANY OF THOSE COMMENTS AS FACTUAL.

JIM DOWNING CONTINUES TO STAY AT HER BEDSIDE, WE PRESUME, SINCE THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS OF HIM LEAVING THE HOSPITAL SINCE HE ARRIVED IN SUPPORT OF HIS FRIEND, WHO MANY ARE TOUTING AS A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP. AFTER OUR UPCOMING BREAK, WE'LL SPEAK TO MEDICAL EXPERTS WHO WILL ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER ANY OF US SHOULD BE CONCERNED THAT A SUPPOSED 'HEALER' LIKE MR. DOWNING HAS THUS FAR BEEN UNABLE TO CURE HER, LIKE HE HAS SO MANY OTHERS.



WITH SPECULATION ALREADY SURROUNDING DOWNING'S ACTUAL ABILITIES, THERE ARE SOME WHO WONDER WHAT IMPACT THIS CURRENT SITUATION WILL HAVE ON THE OPENING OF HIS *JOHN DOE FOUNDATION*, WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN EARLY NEXT YEAR. PROSPECTIVE PATIENTS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE HAVE BEEN INUNDATING THE FOUNDATION WITH REQUESTS FOR A PERSONAL MEETING WITH MR. DOWNING. HE WAS RECENTLY CLEARED BY A MEDICAL TEAM TO BE ABLE TO APPLY HIS MYSTERIOUS POWERS ON SOME OF THOSE IN DIRE MEDICAL NEED. THE GOVERNMENT HAS YET TO DECIDE IF THEY WILL PERMIT THE USE OR OPERATION OF ANY UNREGULATED MEDICAL PROCEDURES ON U.S. CITIZENS.

THE DEBATE SO FAR HAS BEEN WHETHER THE MERE TOUCHING OF A PERSON, EVEN WITH THE CLEAR INTENT OF PHYSICALLY HEALING THEM, IS CONSIDERED A TRUE MEDICAL ACTION. OR, IS IT MERELY SOME SPIRITUAL PROCESS THAT MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE PROFOUND RESULTS ON A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE. A SENATE HEARING HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR NEXT WEEK, THOUGH MR. DOWNING HAS NOT BEEN ASKED TO TESTIFY IN THIS FIRST ROUND OF QUESTIONING.

ALSO, CITY OFFICIALS QUIETLY RELEASED THEIR FINDINGS FROM LAST YEAR'S 'GREEN GLOW'* THAT APPEARED OVER THE CITY ONE EVENING LAST SEPTEMBER. THE REPORT STATES THAT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT ANY TERRORIST FACTIONS WERE INVOLVED.

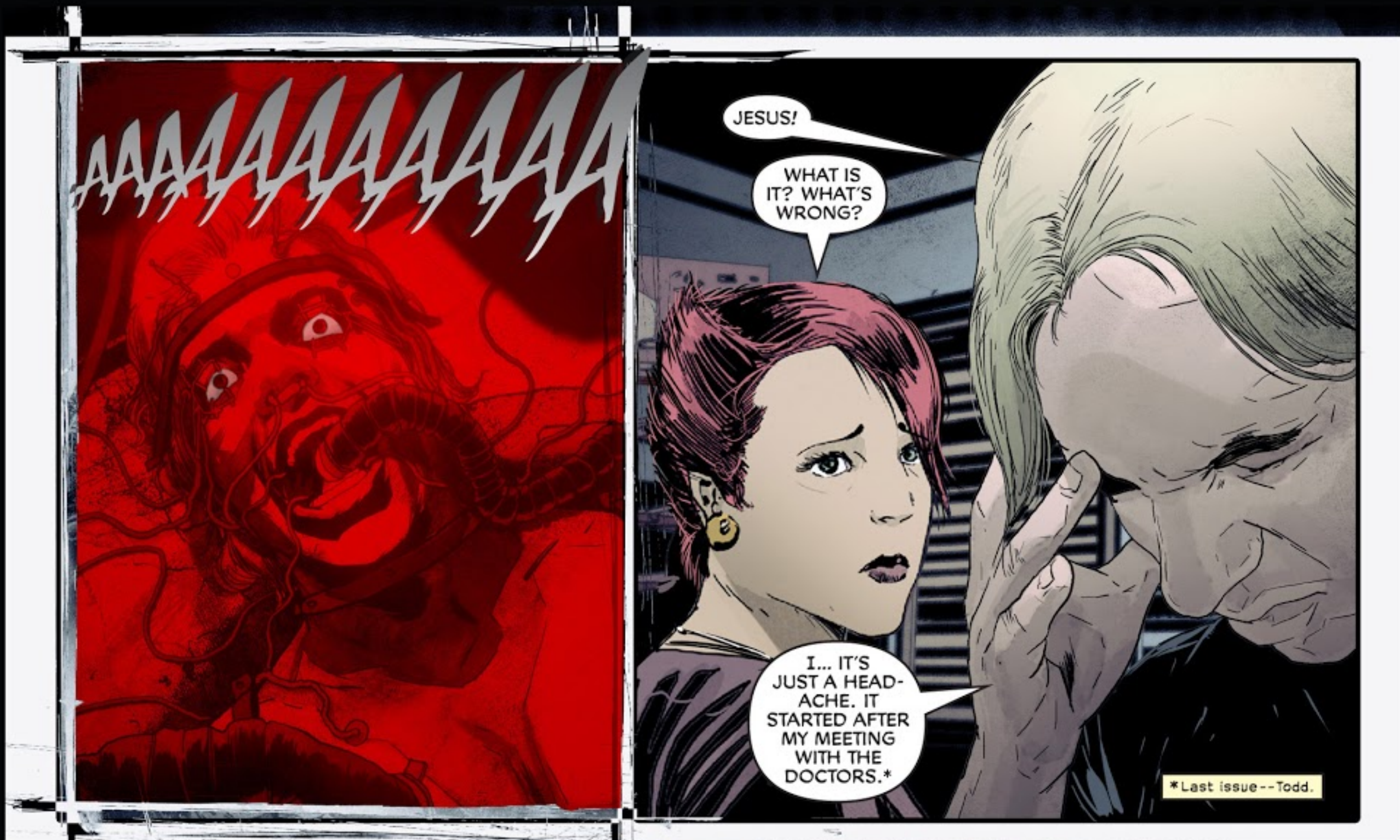


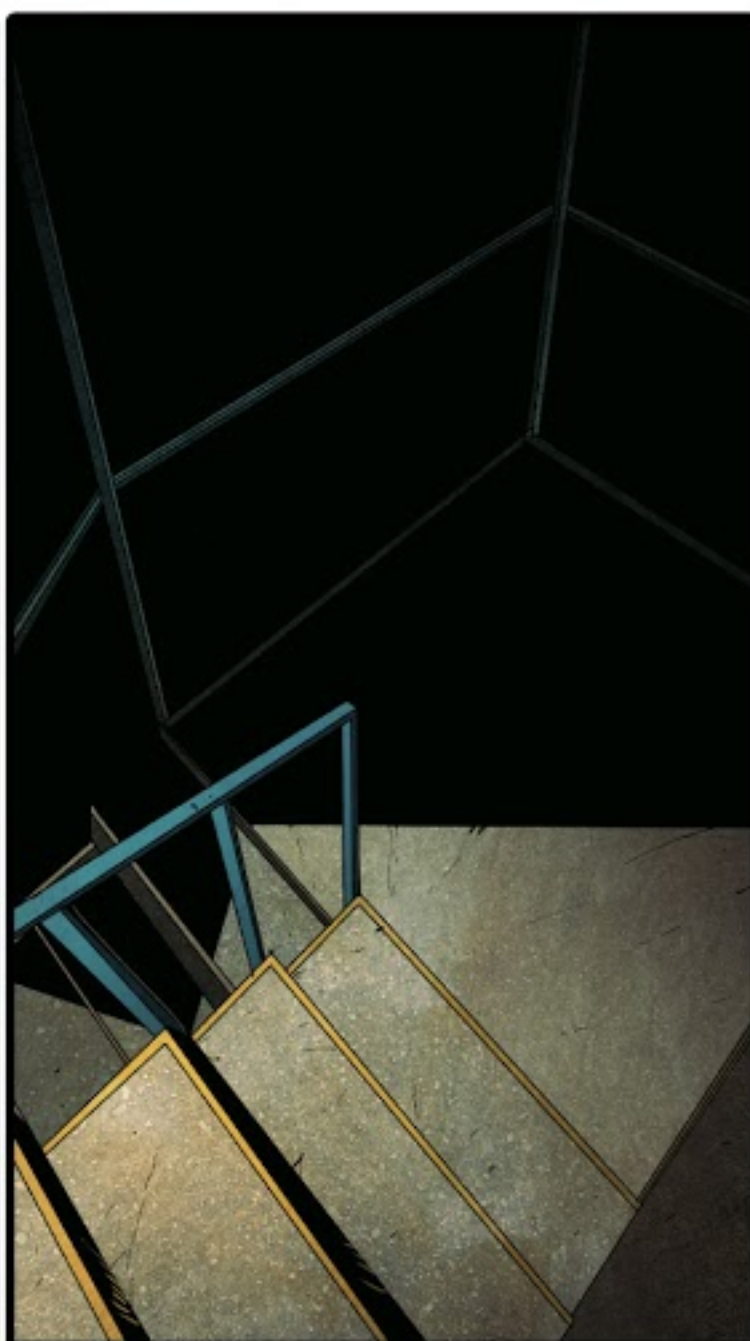
ALRIGHT, HERE WE GO AGAIN!
THE GOVERNMENT WANTS US TO BELIEVE THAT EVEN THOUGH THERE CONTINUES TO BE MORE AND MORE POTENTIAL CASES OF THE *EBOLA VIRUS* SPREADING ACROSS THIS COUNTRY...OF WHICH PRESIDENT OBAMA IS *CLUELESS* TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT, THIS LATEST INCIDENT INVOLVING CELEBRITY '*GOD MAN*', JIM DOWNING, AND HIS *SULTRY* GIRLFRIEND, HAVE NO CONNECTION TO EACH OTHER. I GUESS THEY THINK WE'RE EITHER *STUPID* OR ARE TOO SICK OURSELVES TO DO *ANYTHING ABOUT IT!!!*

I'VE BEEN SCREAMING FOR DOWNING TO OFFER HIS '*SPECIAL POWERS*' TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO HELP ERADICATE EBOLA AND ANY OTHER *DISEASES* HE CAN! IF HE'S SUCH A WONDERFUL GUY WHO'S CAPABLE OF THESE *MAGICAL* CURING SESSIONS, THEN IN *GOD'S NAME* WHY ISN'T HE ALREADY ON THE GOVERNMENT *PAYROLL???*

AND *DON'T TELL ME* IT'S BECAUSE THEY HAVEN'T ASKED HIM YET! THOUGH, THESE ARE THE SAME *QUACKS* THAT HAVE HAD A YEAR TRYING TO FIGURE OUT A *GIANT GREEN LIGHT* THAT *BLANKETED* THIS CITY LAST YEAR. A *GIANT LIGHT* COMES DOWN FROM THE SKIES AND *NO ONE KNOWS* WHAT IT WAS?!!! ALL OF THIS INCOMPETENCE IS GETTING *EXHAUSTING* FOLKS. CANADA IS LOOKING *BETTER AND BETTER EACH DAY!!*









HEY, JERRY... THANKS FOR DOING THIS. I OWE YOU ONE.

ARE YOU KIDDING? YOU KNOW HOW MANY TIMES YOU SAVED MY ASS WHEN YOU WORKED HERE? REMEMBER THE SANTIZI STORY? I WOULD'VE BEEN FIRED IF YOU HADN'T DROPPED THAT FILE ON MY DESK. AND I HATE IT THAT YOU NEVER TOLD ME HOW YOU EVEN OBTAINED IT!

I'VE GOT MY SOURCES. LET'S JUST LEAVE IT AT THAT.

YOU ALWAYS HAD BETTER SOURCES THAN THE REST OF US.

SO WHAT'RE YOU LOOKING FOR?



A COUPLE NAMES-- FROM YOUR MAIN DATA SYSTEM.

WHOA! DUDE! I DON'T KNOW THOSE PASSWORDS. NO ONE ON THIS FLOOR DOES.

I ALREADY HAVE THEM.

YOU HAVE THE PASSWORDS?! CHRIST-- YOU BEEN HACKING AGAIN?



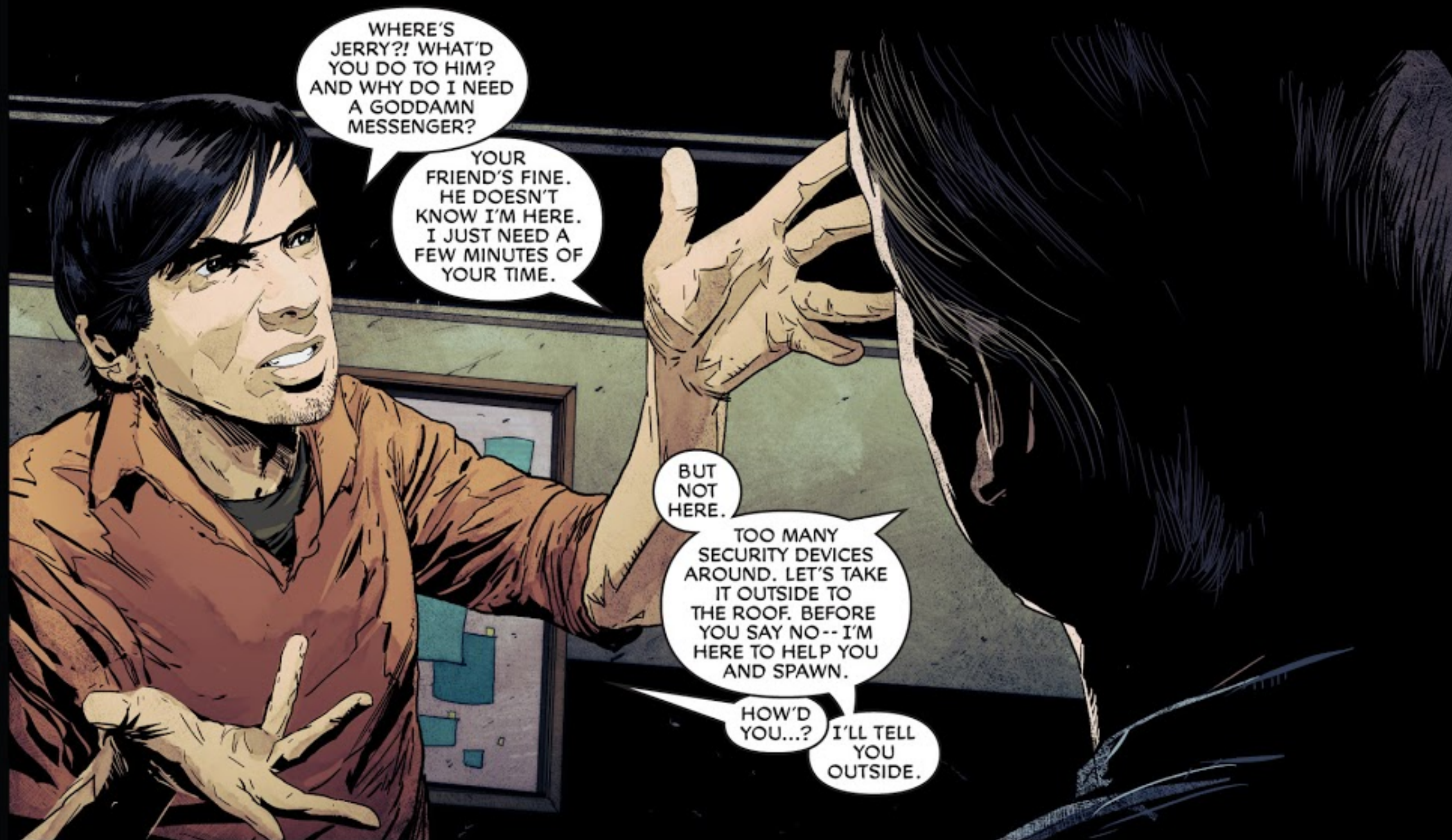
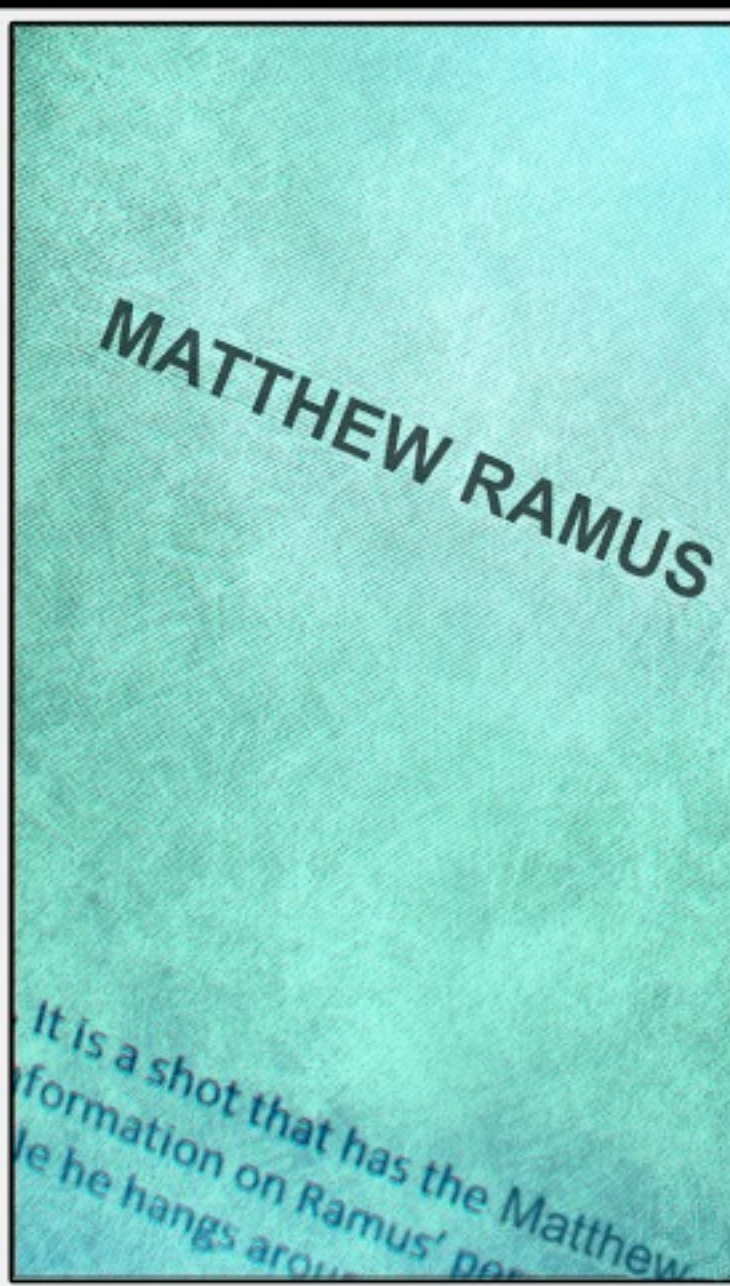
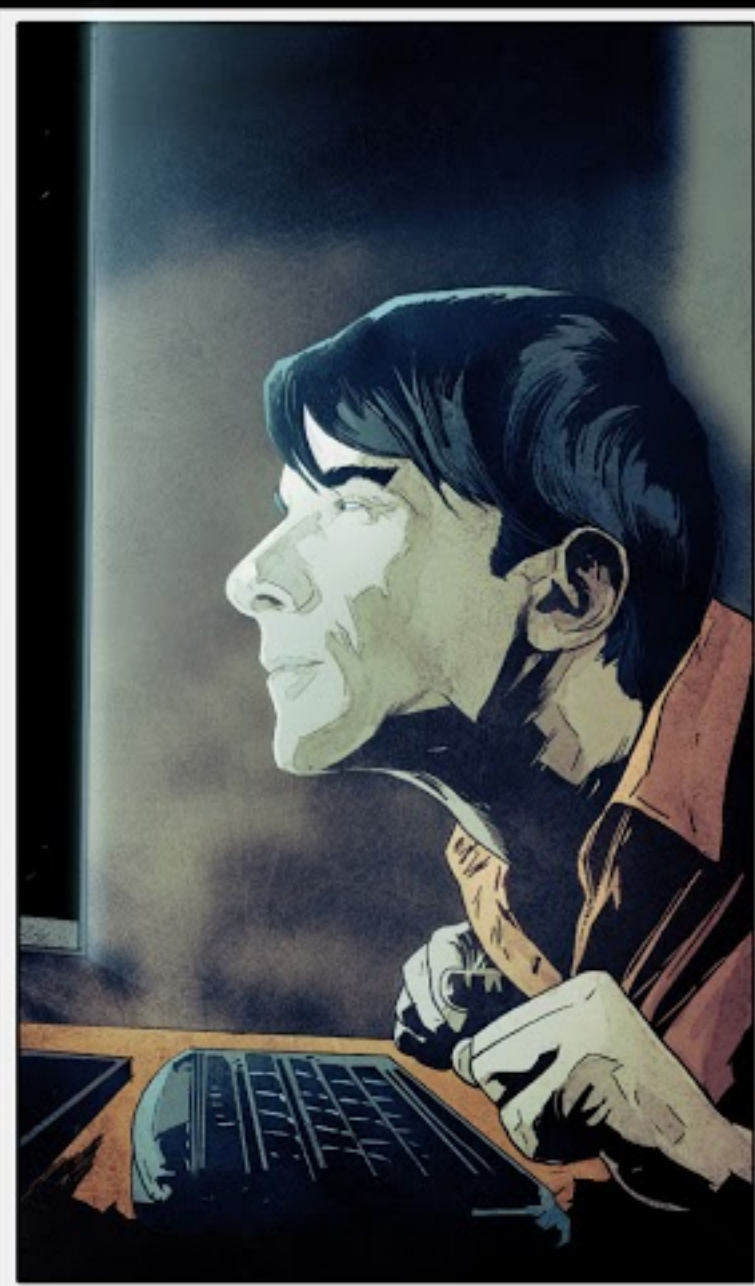
I DON'T LIKE USING THAT TERM.

YOU ALWAYS WERE A SICK BASTARD... AND WE LOVED YOU FOR IT!

HEY! BEFORE WE GET STARTED, YOU NEED SOMETHING TO DRINK? I'M GOING GRAB SOMETHING FROM THE LUNCH ROOM.

MAYBE A COKE.

YOU GOT IT. BE RIGHT BACK.





I DON'T PLAN ON SPENDING A LOT OF TIME EXPLAINING THINGS. I JUST NEED YOU TO ACCEPT WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY. IT'S MORE EFFICIENT THAT WAY.

YOU'RE IN DANGER. WE ALL ARE.



IF WHAT I THINK IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN DOES, THE CONSEQUENCES WILL BE DRASTIC AND FAR REACHING.

OKAY, THAT'S KIND OF DRAMATIC, BUT YOU'VE GOT MY ATTENTION. WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT SPECIFICALLY? HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT JIM AND SPAWN?

AND...

WHY DO YOU SEEM... FAMILIAR?



MY NAME'S DANIEL KILGORE. I TRIED SPEAKING WITH YOU AT THE HOSPITAL-- YOU WERE OBVIOUSLY DISTRACTED. BUT WHAT MATTERS NOW IS MAKING SURE SPAWN WINS HIS NEXT BATTLE.



IT'S HIS FINAL TEST!

DO ME A FAVOR-- STOP TALKING IN METAPHORS AND TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO DO WITH JIM.

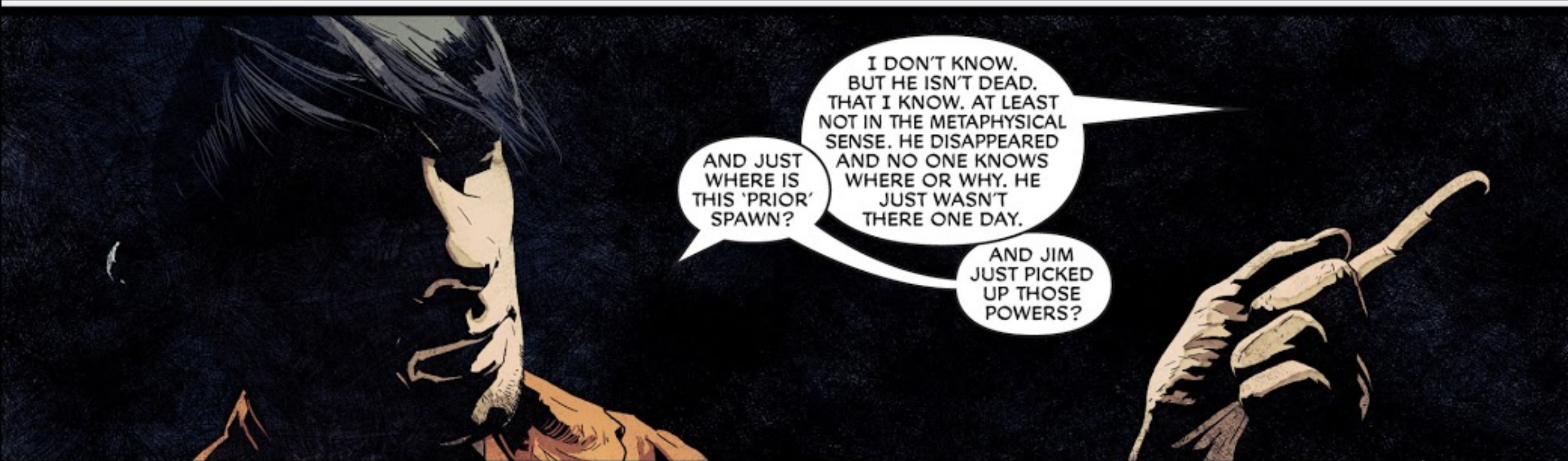
I DIDN'T SAY JIM!

I SAID SPAWN!

THERE'S A DIFFERENCE!



SPAWN HAS BEEN
HERE FOR CENTURIES--
THE CURSE JUST KEEPS
GETTING PASSED ON. BUT
THE ONE WHO WORE THE
COSTUME BEFORE JIM, HE'S
THE ONE I'M TALKING ABOUT.
BECAUSE IF HE MEETS HIS
LAST TWO CHALLENGES...
EVERYONE WILL
FEAR HIM!



AND JUST
WHERE IS
THIS 'PRIOR'
SPAWN?

I DON'T KNOW.
BUT HE ISN'T DEAD.
THAT I KNOW. AT LEAST
NOT IN THE METAPHYSICAL
SENSE. HE DISAPPEARED
AND NO ONE KNOWS
WHERE OR WHY. HE
JUST WASN'T
THERE ONE DAY.

AND JIM
JUST PICKED
UP THOSE
POWERS?



NO! HE WAS
CHOSEN! SIMMONS
WOULDN'T HAVE LEFT
THAT TO CHANCE. SO FOR
WHATEVER REASON YOUR
FRIEND, JIM DOWNING, WAS
PICKED FOR A SPECIFIC
PURPOSE.

I THINK
SIMMONS KNEW
THAT JIM, BEING
HUMAN INSTEAD OF
REANIMATED, WOULD
CONFUSE THOSE
WHO HAD BEEN
HUNTING
THE SPAWN.

FOR WHAT
PURPOSE?



BECAUSE HE,
LIKE MYSELF, IS AT WAR
WITH EVIL! FOR SPAWNS,
IT'S THEIR COSTUMES THAT
CONTROL IT. YOU WIELD
MORE POWER THAN
ANYONE IN
EXISTENCE.



BUT, IF THE
COSTUME GETS THE
UPPER HAND, THEN GOD
SAVE US ALL! AND RIGHT
NOW YOUR FRIEND,
JIM, IS LOSING THAT
BATTLE!

ALL THOSE PEOPLE
HE THINKS HE'S CURED--
IT'S A CON! THOSE PEOPLE MAY
BE HEALTHY NOW, BUT IT WON'T LAST.
THE COSTUME SPREAD ITSELF INTO
EVERY ONE OF THOSE THAT DOWNING
TOUCHED. LIKE SPREADING GERMS
FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER.
EXCEPT, INSTEAD OF GERMS, IT'S
A 'BLACK CANCER.' THEY'VE
BEEN INFECTED-- AND
SO HAVE YOU.

I
DON'T
BELIEVE
YOU.



SO DON'T
HELP ME. THAT'S
FINE! AT LEAST BE
SMART ENOUGH
TO HELP YOUR-
SELF!

BY
DOING
WHAT?



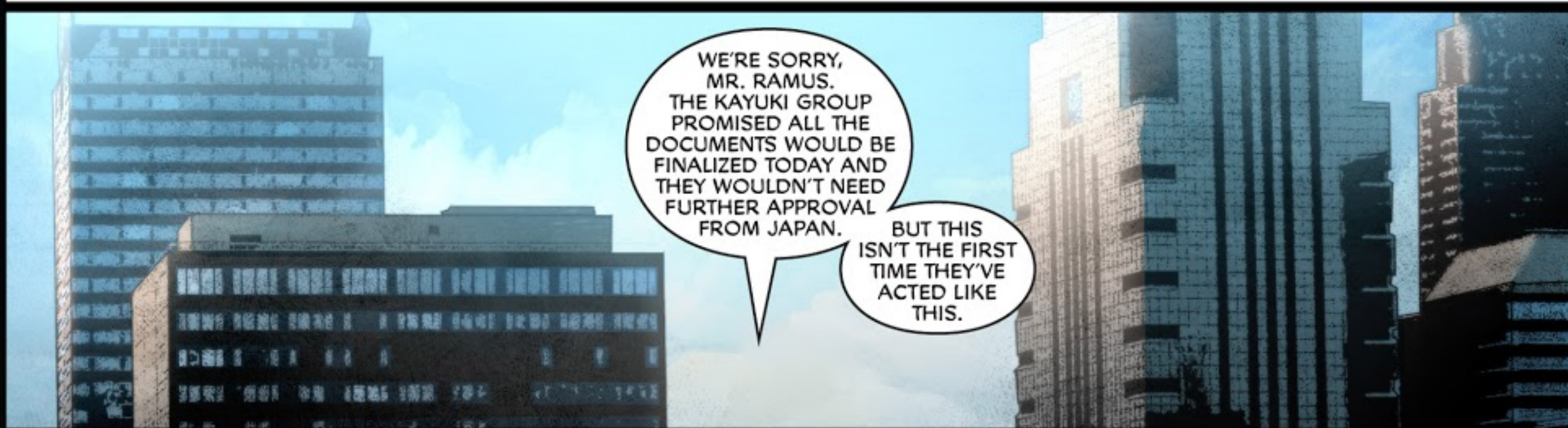
BY USING
KNOWLEDGE!



HERE...
INSIDE THIS IS
SOMEONE THAT
CAN GIVE YOU
ANSWERS.

HER NAME
IS WANDA
BLAKE.





WE'RE SORRY,
MR. RAMUS.
THE KAYUKI GROUP
PROMISED ALL THE
DOCUMENTS WOULD BE
FINALIZED TODAY AND
THEY WOULDN'T NEED
FURTHER APPROVAL
FROM JAPAN.

BUT THIS
ISN'T THE FIRST
TIME THEY'VE
ACTED LIKE
THIS.



THAT'S NOT IT.
SOMETHING WAS
DIFFERENT TODAY. THEY
SEEMED SMUG. LIKE THEY
WEREN'T AFRAID. EVEN
MR. KAYUKI'S SON, WHO'S
USUALLY QUITE RESERVED,
SEEMED OVER CONFIDENT.
I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN I
DON'T KNOW WHY MY
ENEMIES ARE HAPPY. OR
WHY THEIR BEHAVIOR
SEEMS ODD.

YOU HEARD
THEM, SIR. THEY
KNEW OUR URANIUM
SUPPLY WAS LOW.
SOMEONE LEAKED THAT
INFO FROM OUR SIDE.
SO THEY WERE ABLE
TO CALL YOUR
BLUFF.



NO.

IT'S MORE
THAN THAT.
SOMETHING
DOESN'T FEEL
RIGHT.

YOUR
LIMO IS
WAITING,
SIR.

Minutes Later.



WHEN WE GET
BACK TO THE OFFICE, I
WANT YOU TO CHECK WITH
BANGKOK AND HONG KONG.
SEE WHAT THEY'RE HEARING
FROM OUR OTHER ACCOUNTS.
IF SOMETHING IS TRULY IN
THE AIR I WANT TO KNOW
ABOUT IT.

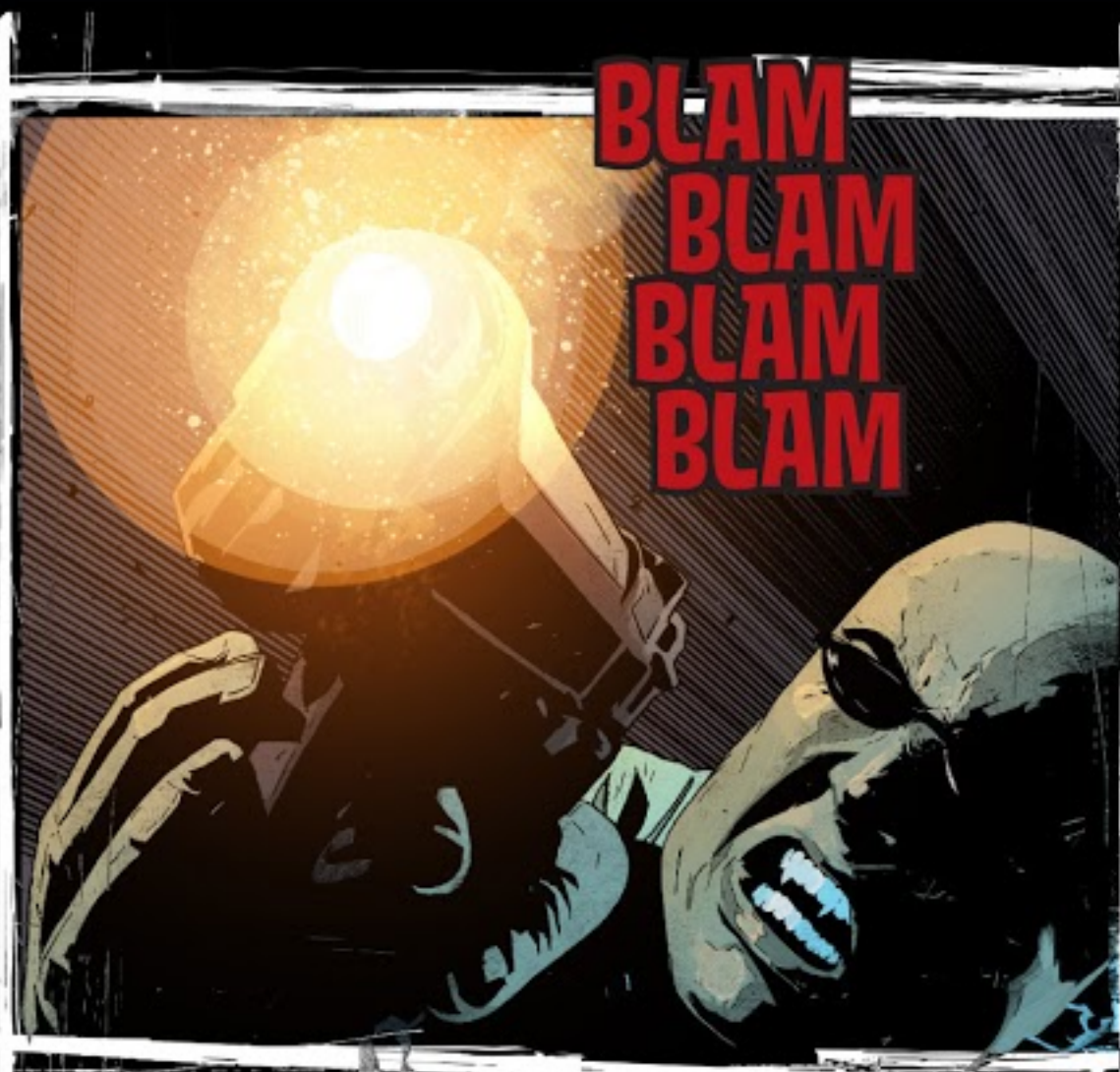
WHAT'S THE
UPDATE ON
DOWNING? IS HE
STILL AT THE
HOSPITAL?

THUD

YOU
HEAR
THAT?



SHIT....!



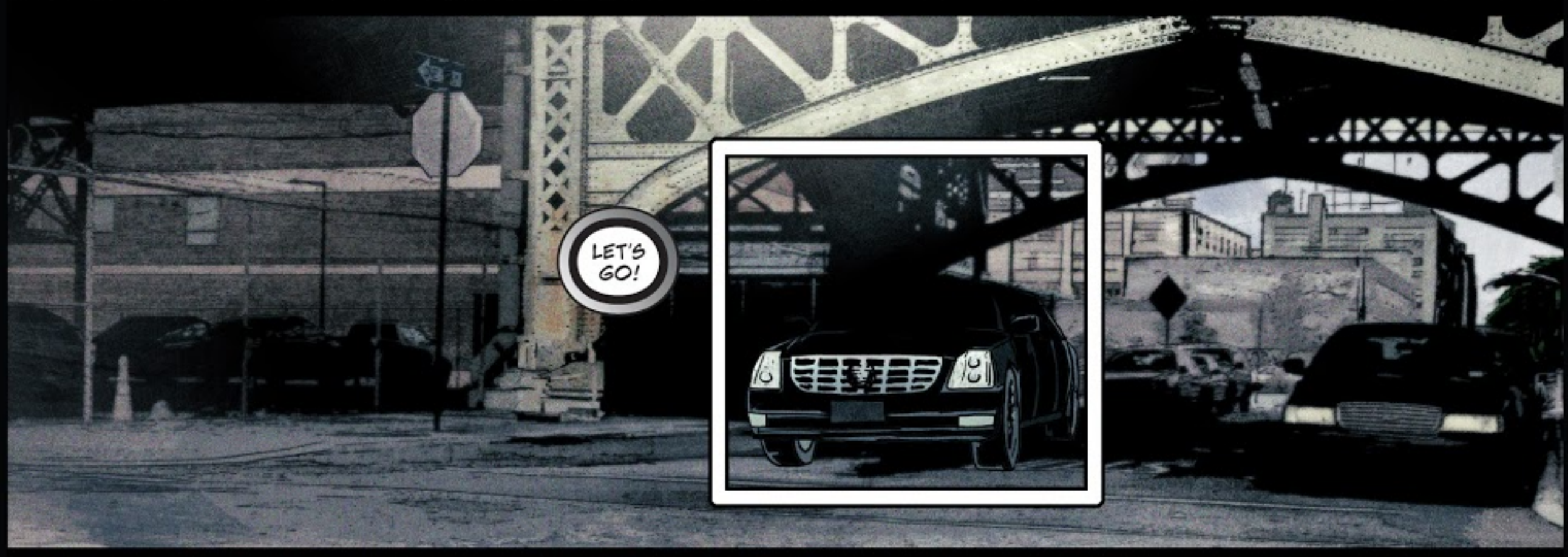
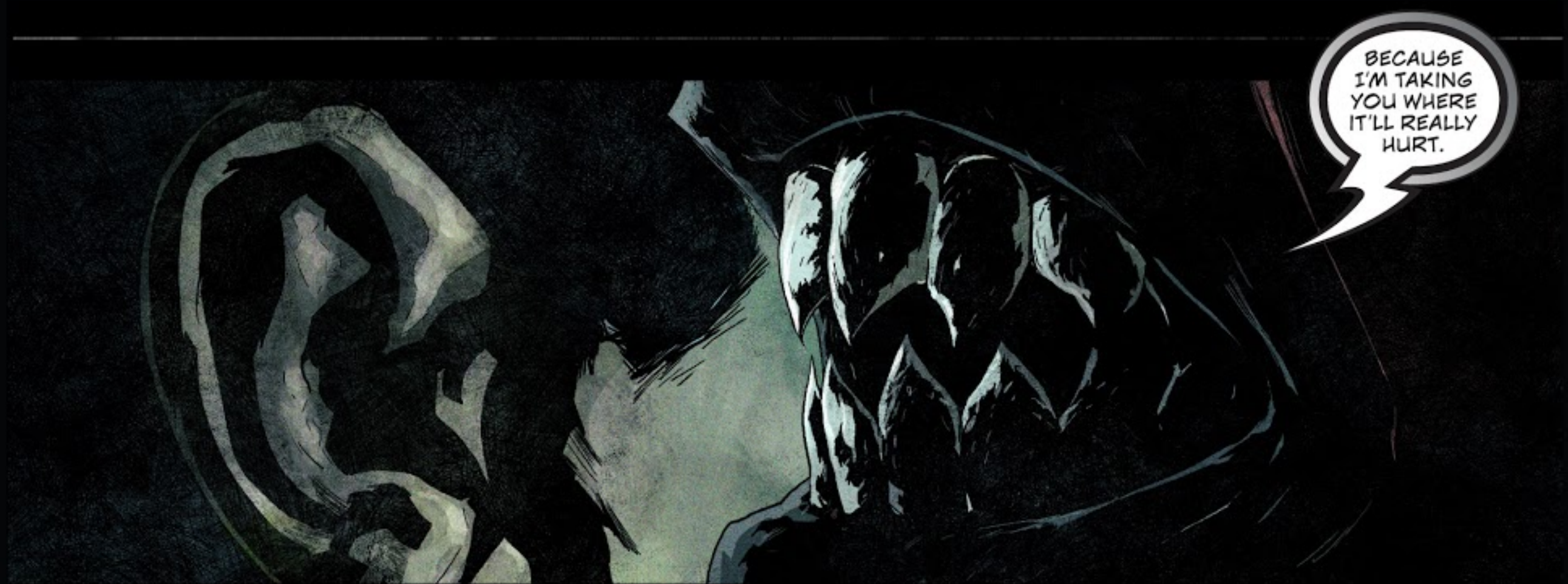
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM



THE SUN
HURTS,
DOESN'T
IT?



GOOD!



Later.



HOW'S IT FEEL? TO BE ON THE RECEIVING END INSTEAD OF LORDING OVER SOMEONE BEGGING FOR THEIR LIFE? HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE YOU PUT IN THE EXACT SAME POSITION YOU'RE IN NOW?

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

ULTIMATELY... EVERYTHING! BUT FOR NOW I'LL SETTLE FOR INFORMATION. I WANT TO KNOW HOW TO CURE SARA. I TRIED USING MY POWERS ON HER LAST NIGHT-- IT DIDN'T WORK? I WANT TO KNOW WHY!

I DON'T KNOW!

AND EVEN IF I DID, YOUR GIRLFRIEND CAN ROT FOR ALL I CARE!

I THOUGHT YOU'D SAY THAT!

SO, I'LL WAIT AS LONG AS IT TAKES FOR THE SUN TO BURN RIGHT THROUGH YOU.

GOD... DAMN YOU! I DON'T HAVE YOUR ANSWERS! NO ONE DOES!

LIKE I SAID, I'LL WAIT.



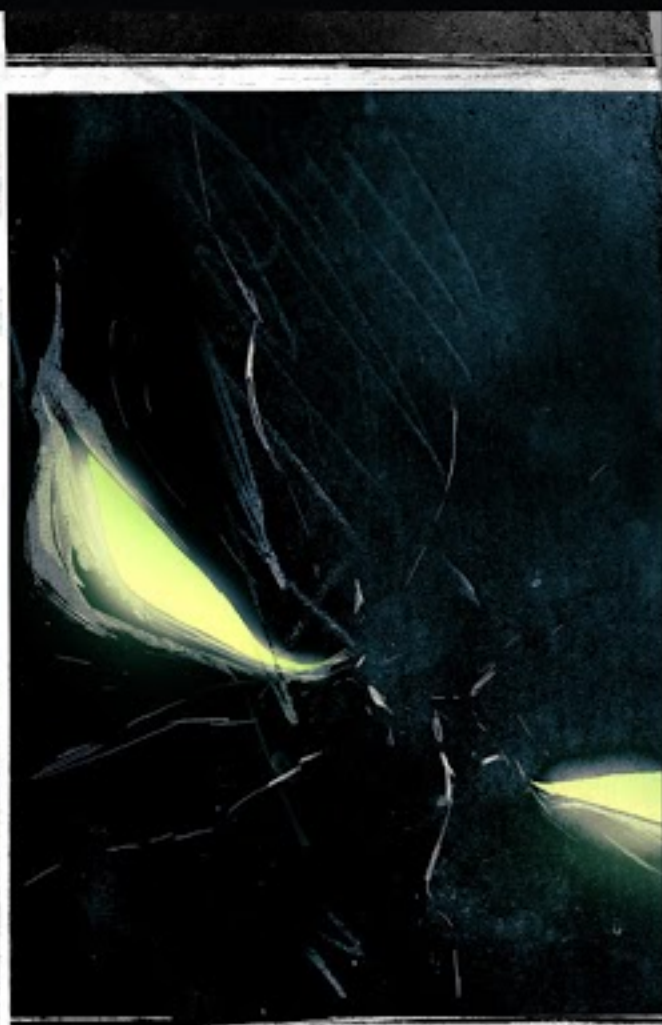
YOUR COSTUME!
IT POISONED HER!!
NOT ME!

I KNOW. THAT'S WHY I NEED TO TALK TO IT. YOU'RE NOT HERE BECAUSE I THOUGHT YOU COULD TELL ME ANYTHING-- YOU'RE HERE SO I CAN **USE** YOU!

THE ONLY WAY FOR ME TO SPEAK WITH MY COSTUME IS TO GIVE IT A 'HOST' IT WON'T KILL. I'M HOPING THAT'S YOU BECAUSE SINCE WE'VE BOTH BEEN TO HELL, THE COSTUME SHOULDN'T MIND TAKING OVER YOUR BODY A SHORT WHILE.

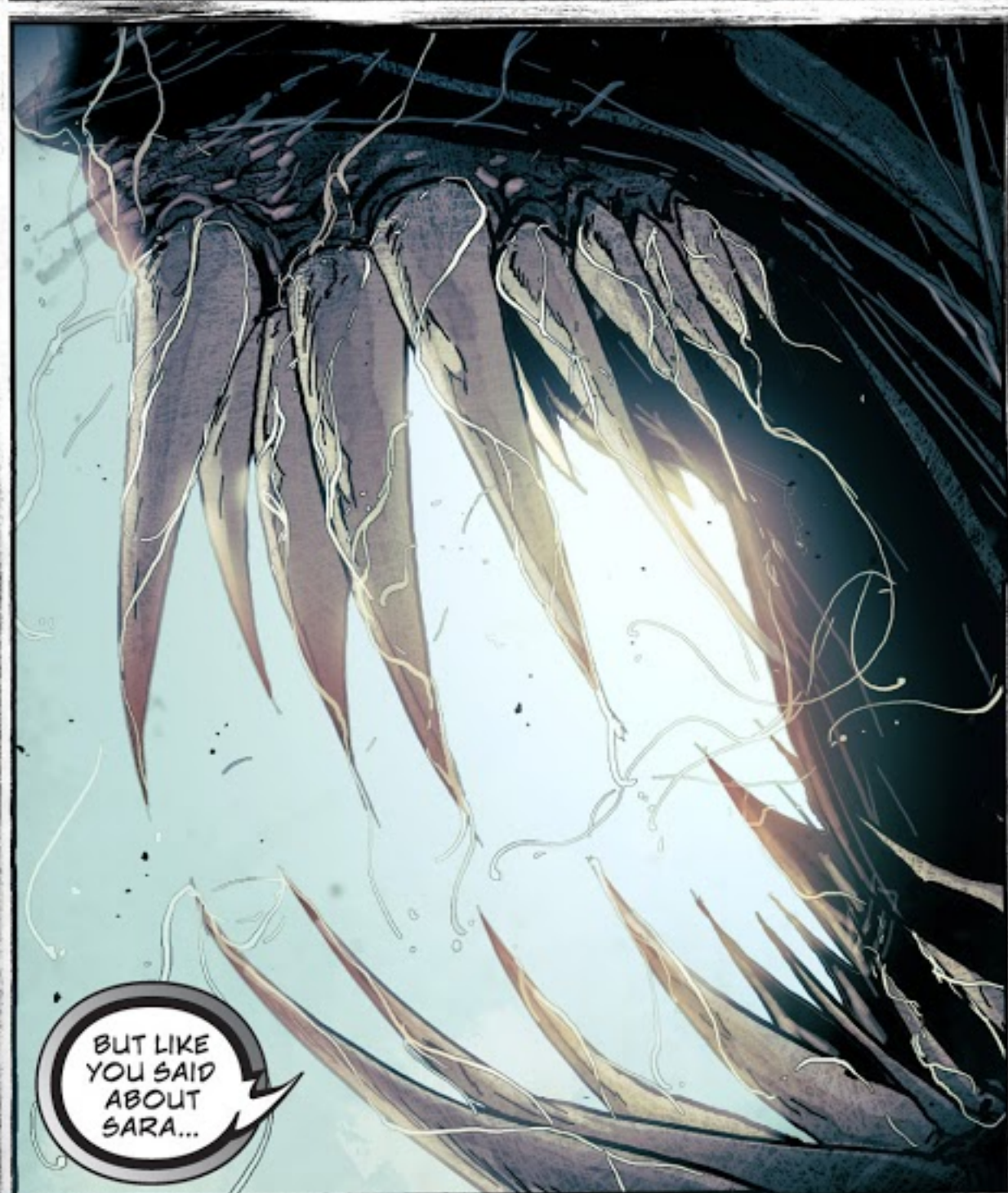


THOUGH
I CAN'T
GUARANTEE IT
WON'T BE
INCREDIBLY
PAINFUL.



HOW DO
YOU KNOW
THIS'LL
WORK?!

**I
DON'T!**



BUT LIKE
YOU SAID
ABOUT
SARA...



I DON'T
CARE WHAT
HAPPENS TO
YOU!



AND IF YOU
DON'T MAKE IT,
DON'T WORRY.
THERE'S PLENTY OF
OTHER VAMPIRES
THAT COULD TAKE
YOUR PLACE.



YOU
DON'T NEED
TO LOOK
HARD TO FIND
ONE.



YOU'RE NOT
ONE OF US!
YOU'RE A HALF-
BREED! A
NOTHING!

I'D SAVE
MY BREATH IF
I WERE YOU. YOU
MAY NEED IT IN
A COUPLE OF
SECONDS.



IDIOT!
IT'LL EAT
US BOTH
ALIVE!



NO IT WON'T.
BECAUSE IT'LL
BE WEAK ONCE
IT TRANSFERS
TO YOU.

SEE THAT
PIPE YOU'RE TIED
TO-- IT'S FILLED WITH
DIRT FROM THE 'DEAD
ZONE.' THAT'LL SAP
ITS POWERS FOR
AWHILE.



BY THEN
I'LL HAVE
GOTTEN MY
ANSWERS. SO,
GOOD-BYE, BLUDD.
I HOPE I NEVER
SEE YOU
AGAIN.



YARRRRRGGGGGHHH



THAT'S IT,
SYMBIOTE,
FIGHT IT!

FIGHT ALL
YOU WANT,
IT WON'T
MATTER!

DOWNING...
I'LL KILL
YOU!

THEN YOU'LL
DIE TOO! BECAUSE
WE'RE STILL ATTACHED.
WE CAN'T SEPARATE
COMPLETELY FROM EACH
OTHER. SO POUR YOUR
EVIL OUT AS MUCH AS
YOU WANT. BECAUSE
TODAY...

I
OWN
YOU!



AL SIMMONS RETURNS NEXT ISSUE!

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DIGITAL
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SPAWN®



McFARLANE
SZYMON

YOU'RE
GOING TO
DIE!
EVERY LAST
ONE
OF YOU!

ENOUGH!

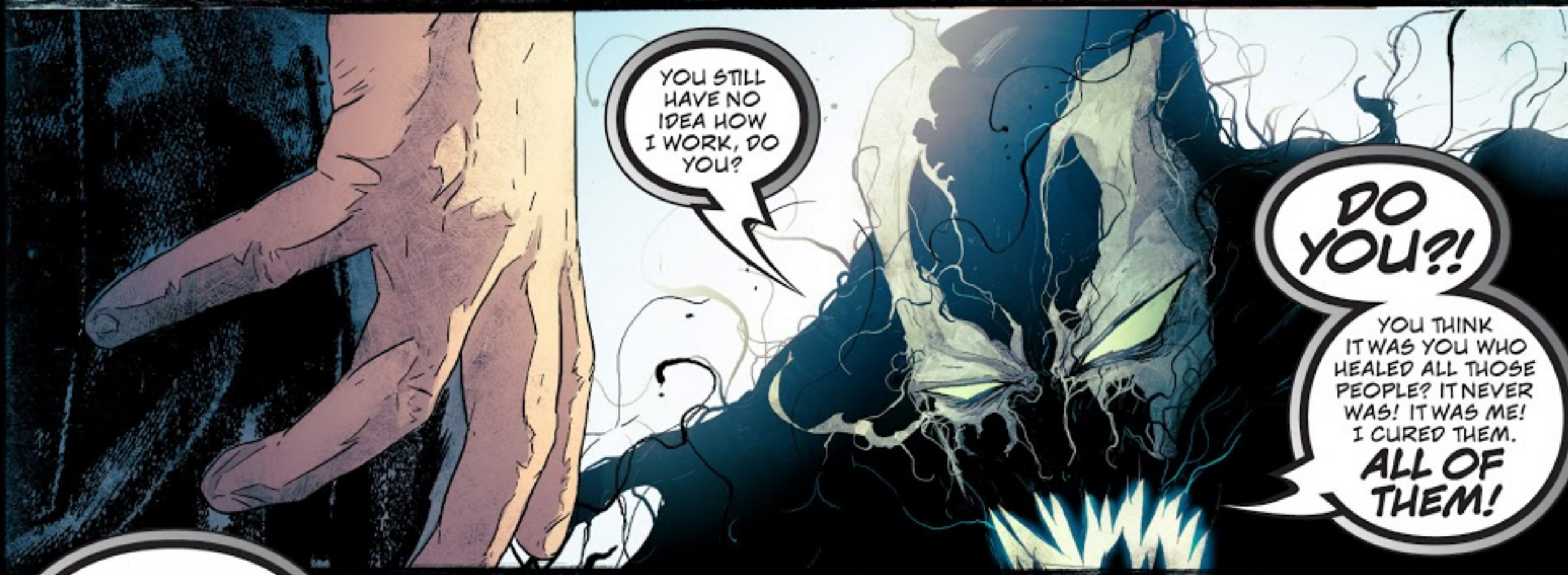
IF YOU HAD
THE POWER, YOU
WOULDN'T NEED TO TALK.
YOU'D JUST KILL ME!
BUT YOU CAN'T... OR YOU
WON'T. SO YOU DON'T GET TO
SIT THERE AND QUESTION
ANYTHING I WANT
YOU TO DO!

AND I HOPE
YOU KEEP POURING
OUT ALL THE EVIL INSIDE
YOU! IT'LL MAKE THINGS
THAT MUCH EASIER FOR
ME! BECAUSE YOU'RE
DONE CONTROLLING
ME!





AND
SOON...
I'LL BE YOUR
MASTER.



YOU STILL
HAVE NO
IDEA HOW
I WORK, DO
YOU?

**DO
YOU?!**

YOU THINK
IT WAS YOU WHO
HEALED ALL THOSE
PEOPLE? IT NEVER
WAS! IT WAS ME!
I CURED THEM.
**ALL OF
THEM!**

BECAUSE I KNEW
ONE DAY YOU'D RISE
UP AND TRY TO ASSERT
YOURSELF. THEY'VE ALL
TRIED THAT. EVERY SPAWN
I'VE BEEN ATTACHED TO
THOUGHT THEY WERE THE
ONE WITH POWER INSTEAD
OF ACCEPTING THAT
I WAS *GIVING* IT
TO THEM!

SO YOU'RE
GOING TO STAND
HERE *NOW* AND
PRETEND TO BE
SUPERIOR TO
ME?!



I'M NOT
PRETENDING.



THAT'S
YOUR FIRST
MISTAKE.

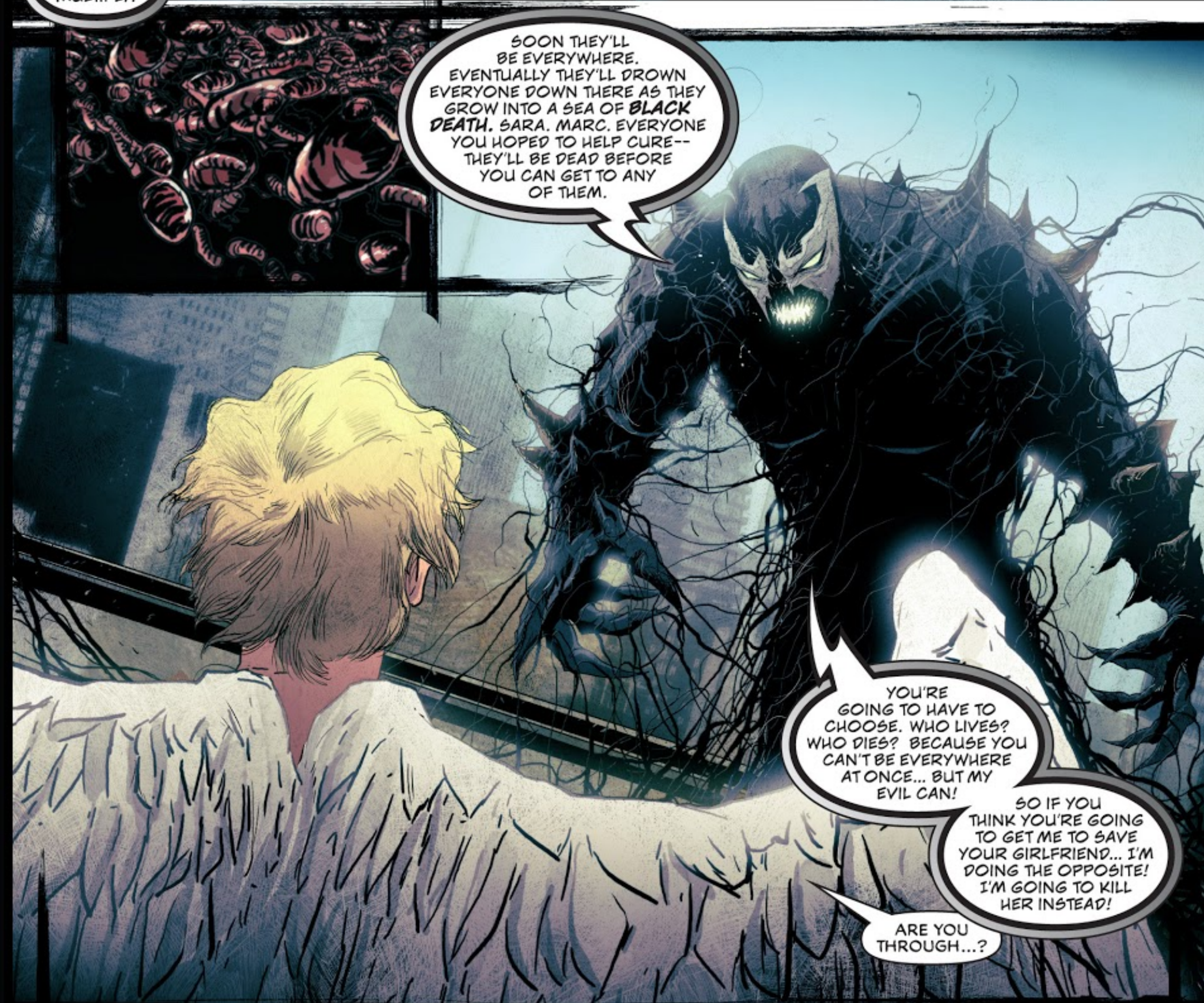


GIVING
'FORM' TO
YOUR EVIL
WAS YOUR
SECOND.



THEY
DON'T NEED
MY EVIL TO FEED
OFF. YOU HUMANS
HAVE MORE
THAN ENOUGH TO
MAKE THEM
THRIVE.

TO
MAKE THEM
MULTIPLY.



SOON THEY'LL
BE EVERYWHERE.
EVENTUALLY THEY'LL DROWN
EVERYONE DOWN THERE AS THEY
GROW INTO A SEA OF **BLACK
DEATH**. SARA. MARC. EVERYONE
YOU HOPED TO HELP CURE--
THEY'LL BE DEAD BEFORE
YOU CAN GET TO ANY
OF THEM.

YOU'RE
GOING TO HAVE TO
CHOOSE. WHO LIVES?
WHO DIES? BECAUSE YOU
CAN'T BE EVERYWHERE
AT ONCE... BUT MY
EVIL CAN!

SO IF YOU
THINK YOU'RE GOING
TO GET ME TO SAVE
YOUR GIRLFRIEND... I'M
DOING THE OPPOSITE!
I'M GOING TO KILL
HER INSTEAD!

ARE YOU
THROUGH...?

HARDLY!

I'M JUST
GETTING
STARTED.



HA HA HA HEE HEE HA HAA

LAUGH ALL
YOU WANT,
HUMAN...

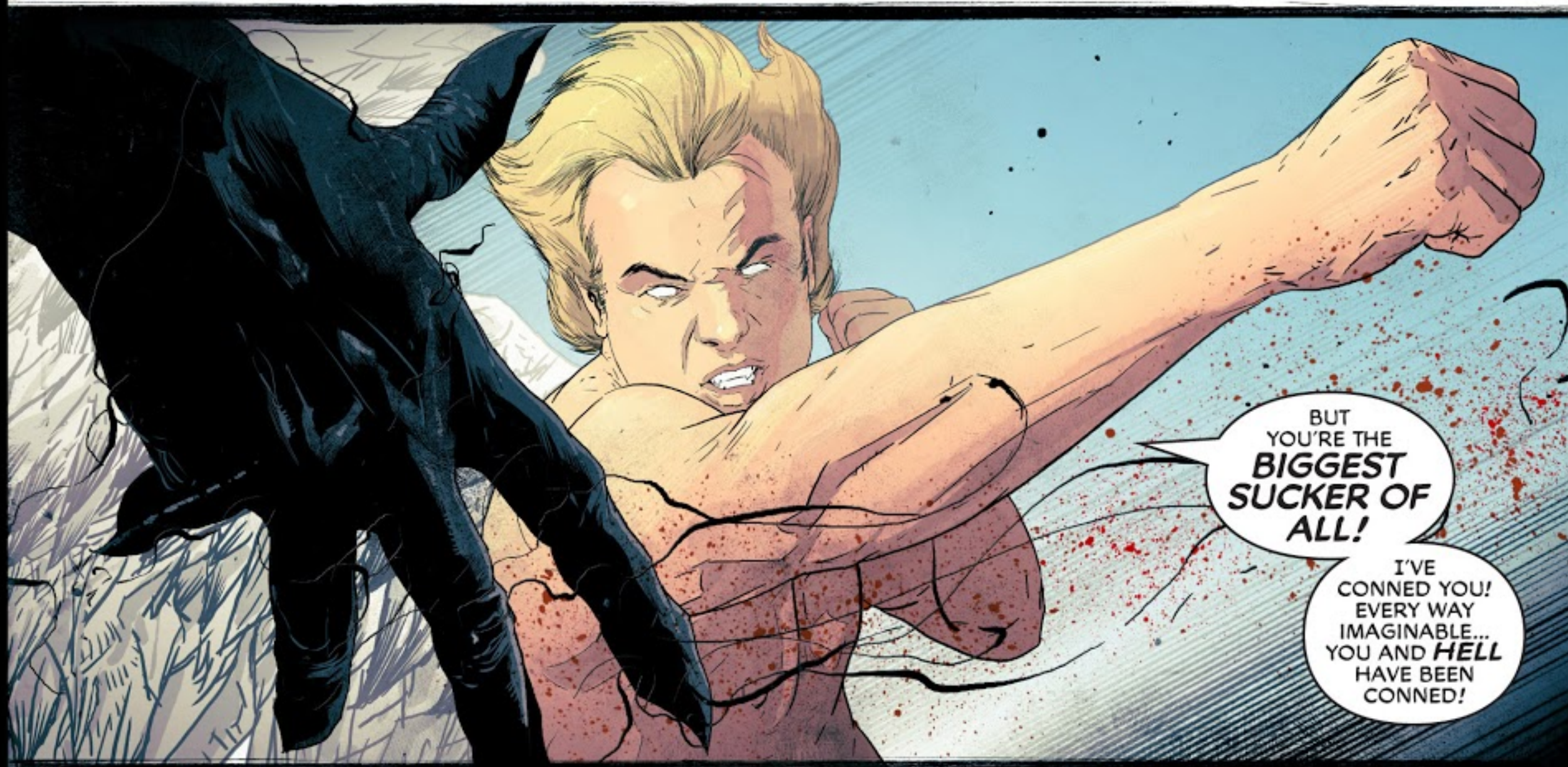
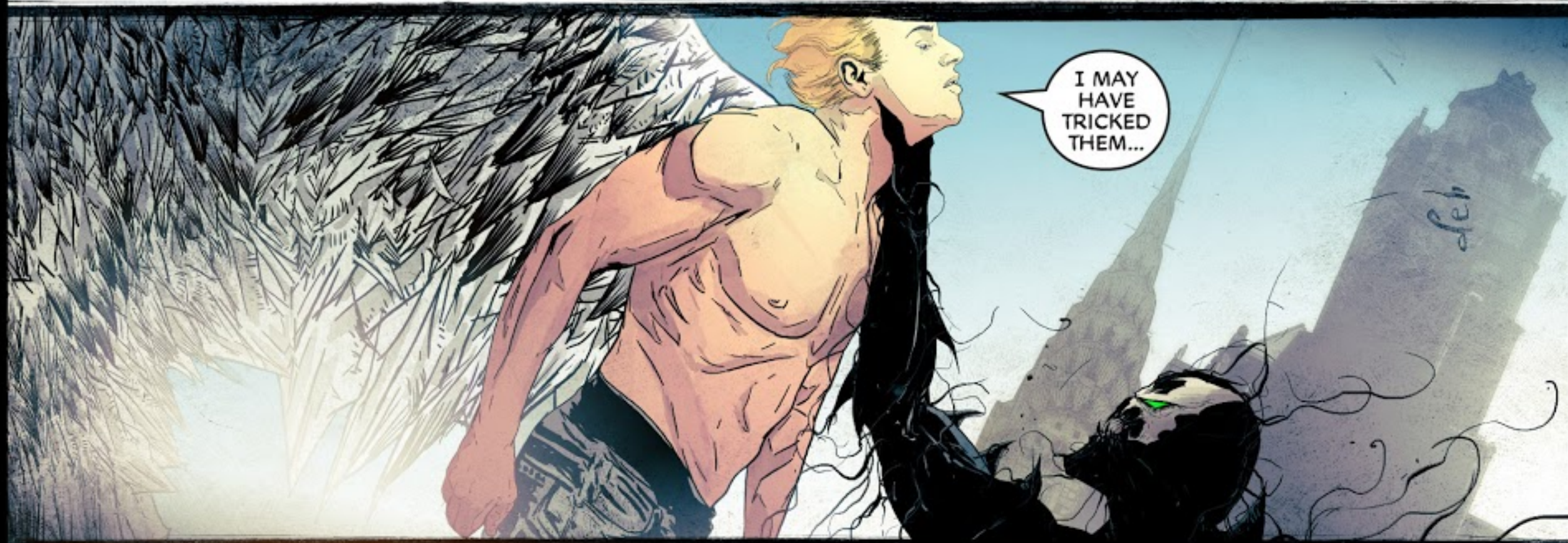
I'M DONE
PLAYING
GAMES.

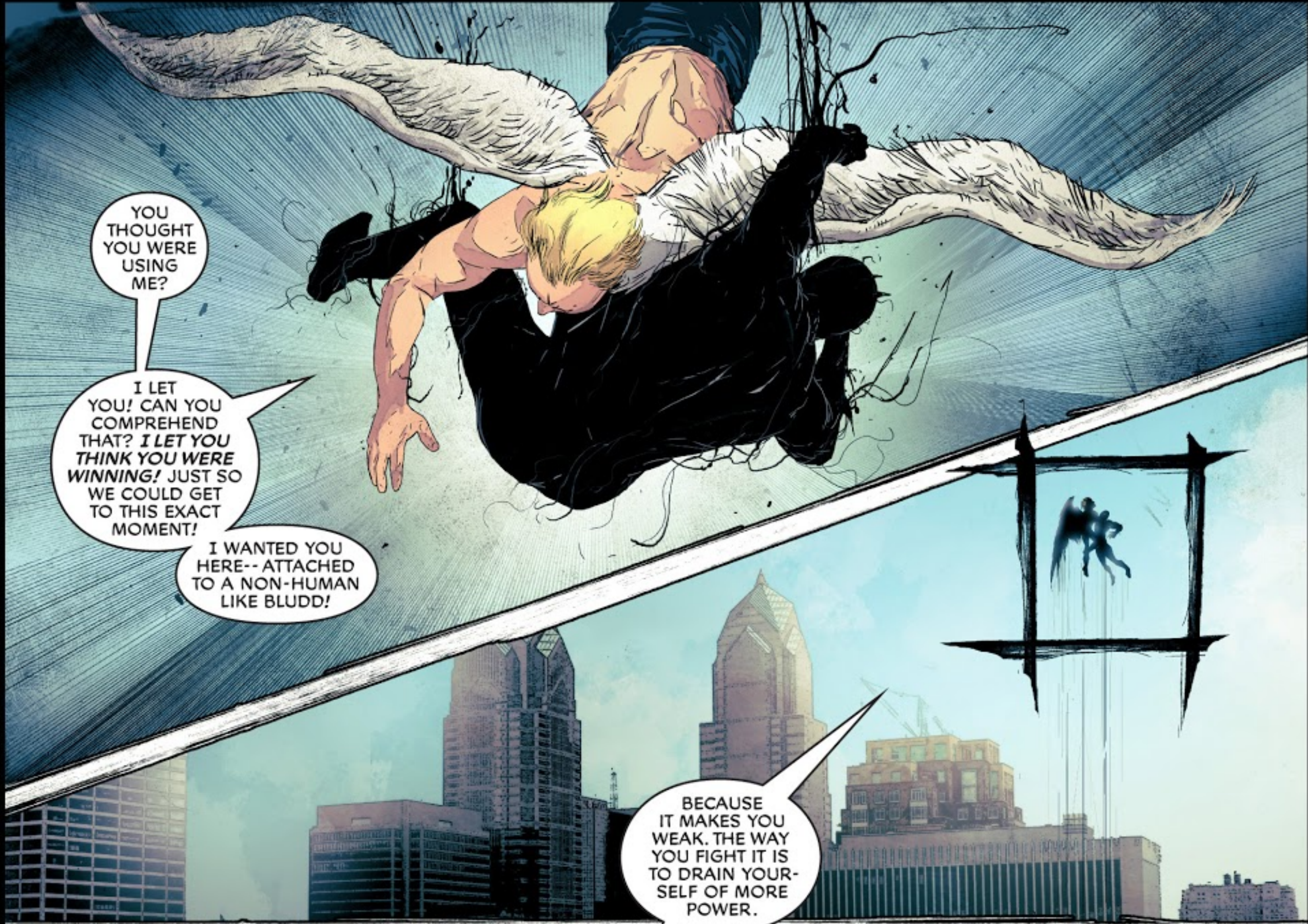


BECAUSE
YOUR ARROGANCE
IS GOING TO COST
MILLIONS OF NEW
YORKERS THEIR
LIVES.

THEY LOOKED
UP TO YOU DOWNING,
THEY THOUGHT YOU
WERE THEIR SAVIOR!
INSTEAD, YOU WERE THEIR
GRIM REAPER!

WHY?
BECAUSE OF A
WOMAN? BECAUSE
OF SARA? YOU'D TRADE
ALL THOSE LIVES BELOW
FOR HER?! EVERYONE
YOU'VE TOUCHED
HAS ALREADY BEEN
POISONED. I MADE
SURE OF THAT!





YOU
THOUGHT
YOU WERE
USING
ME?

I LET
YOU! CAN YOU
COMPREHEND
THAT? *I LET YOU
THINK YOU WERE
WINNING!* JUST SO
WE COULD GET
TO THIS EXACT
MOMENT!

I WANTED YOU
HERE-- ATTACHED
TO A NON-HUMAN
LIKE BLUDD!

BECAUSE
IT MAKES YOU
WEAK. THE WAY
YOU FIGHT IT IS
TO DRAIN YOUR-
SELF OF MORE
POWER.

SO
SPREAD
YOUR DAMN
EVIL! I DARE
YOU!

BECAUSE
YOU'RE GOING
TO SUBMIT TO
ME... OR WE'RE
BOTH GOING TO
DIE! EITHER
WAY I WIN!

SO TELL
BLUDD TO HOLD
HIS BREATH... THIS
IS GOING
TO BE
PAINFUL!





WITH NEWS ABOUT SARA JOHNSTON'S SUDDEN ILLNESS WHICH FORCED HER TO BE RUSHED TO A HOSPITAL LATE LAST NIGHT, WE ARE STILL AWAITING ANY UPDATES TO HER CURRENT CONDITION. SOME SOURCES SAY SHE IS IN A COMA, WHILE CONFLICTING REPORTS SAY SHE IS AWAKE AND DOCTORS ARE TENDING TO HER INJURIES. IN EITHER CASE, IT APPEARS SHE HAS BEEN LISTED IN STABLE CONDITION.

AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, SHE HAS BEEN LINKED AS THE NURSE WHO WAS AT JIM DOWNING'S BEDSIDE WHEN HE WAS IN HIS MULTI-YEAR COMA. SINCE AWAKENING, HE'S SHOWN TRAITS OF POTENTIAL ENHANCED ABILITIES. THOSE ABILITIES HAVE LED HIM TO START A FOUNDATION WITH THE GOAL OF CURING PATIENTS OF MEDICALLY TERMINAL DISEASES. WHAT HASN'T BECOME CLEAR IS WHAT MISS JOHNSTON'S TRUE RELATIONSHIP IS TO DOWNING. AND IF, AS BEEN SPECULATED, IT'S MORE THAN A PROFESSIONAL BOND BETWEEN THEM...HOW HE'LL DEAL WITH HER SITUATION AND WHAT THE FUTURE CONSEQUENCES ARE REGARDING PLANS MOVING FORWARD, ARE STILL UNKNOWN.



LET ME START BY SAYING, WE IN THE MEDIA CAN BE COMPLETE IDIOTS AT TIMES!! **WHY..?** BECAUSE WE THINK **YOU** VIEWERS ARE SUCKERS! HERE'S HOW IT WORKS...

FIRST WE START BY GIVING YOU NEWS THAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE THE HOTTEST STORY WE THINK YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT. **THEN** WE BUILD IT INTO A HUGE DEAL IN THE FIRST FEW DAYS, REGARDLESS OF HOW IMPORTANT THE STORY **REALLY** IS. WE RAMP UP TO **HYPE-MODE** SO FAST IN TELLING YOU THE NEWS, WE LEAVE VERY LITTLE ROOM TO BUILD IT BIGGER, IN THE EVENT THERE ARE **FACTS** WHICH GROW THE STORY. LET'S LOOK AT A CURRENT EXAMPLE...

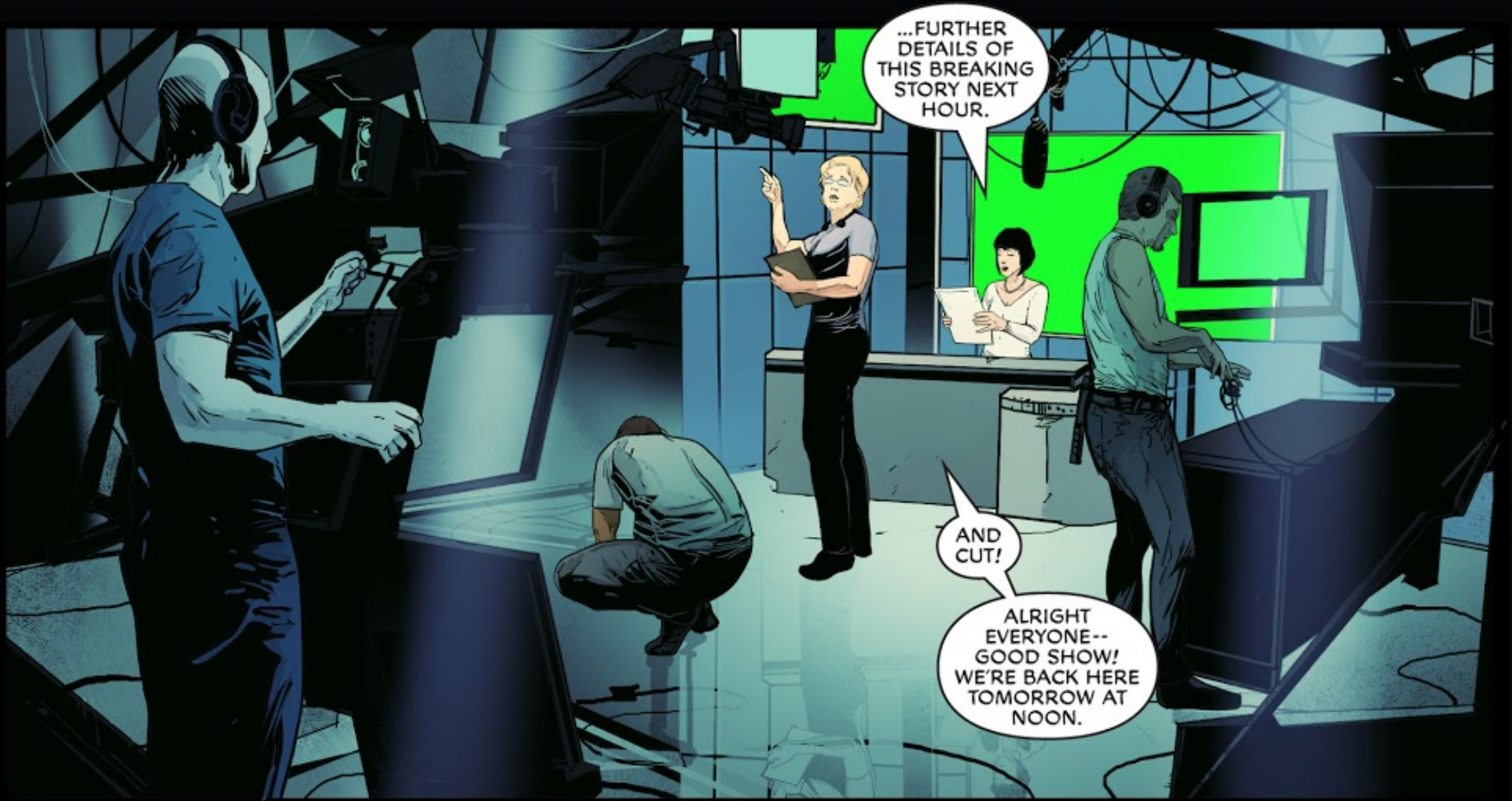
YESTERDAY, EVERYONE WAS IN A PANIC ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO SARA JOHNSTON? WE ASKED: "IS THE NEW SAVIOR'S GIRLFRIEND **DYING**? WHY CAN'T **MYSTERY 'HEALER'** JIM DOWNING SAVE HIS OWN LOVE? IS DOWNING FOUNDATION A **FRAUD**?" ALL OF THESE TANTALIZING SOUND BITES ARE MEANT TO STIR YOUR EMOTIONS AND GET YOU TO PAY ATTENTION, EVEN THOUGH NOTHING IS ACTUALLY THERE BEYOND AN AVERAGE STORY WITH A **TON OF HYPE!**

NOW **TODAY** -- WE SUDDENLY JUMP TO THE 'BUG INVASION' OR THE 'COCKROACH TSUNAMI'! **WHY?** BECAUSE WE **CAN!!** WE WANT YOU TO BE SCARED AND FRIGHTENED SO YOU'LL TUNE IN. WE WANT YOU TO THINK THAT **MAYBE** YOUR HOUSE OR APARTMENT MIGHT BE NEXT. THAT SOON YOU'LL HAVE A **BATHTUB** FULL OF **CREEPY-CRAWLIES!** IT'S ALL B.S.!! TOMORROW WE'LL HAVE ANOTHER SENSATIONAL HEADLINE FOR YOU, SO STAY TUNED...**SUCKERS!!!**



ALL OVER MANHATTAN, POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS ARE FIELDING CALLS FROM CONCERNED CITIZENS ABOUT LARGE INFESTATIONS OF INSECTS AND SMALL CREATURES. RATS, SNAKES, AND OVER A DOZEN TYPES OF BUGS, SEEM TO BE MOBILIZING IN ENORMOUS HORDES THAT SOME WITNESSES ARE SAYING RANGE FROM A FEW HUNDRED TO TENS OF THOUSANDS -- ALL IN THE SAME PLACE. THEIR PRESENCE IS CAUSING SOME MINOR DESTRUCTION SUCH AS ELECTRICAL OUTAGES AND AIR CONDITIONING ISSUES BECAUSE OF THEIR NUMBERS. SO FAR NO INJURIES OR ATTACKS HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED, BUT A CITY OFFICIAL SAID THEY HAVE A TASK FORCE LOOKING INTO WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE CAUSING SUCH AN EXTREME SITUATION.

RECORDS INDICATE THAT THE WEATHER PATTERNS HAVE NOT DRAMATICALLY CHANGED IN THE PAST YEAR -- WHICH SOME THOUGHT MAY BE AN EASY ANSWER TO POINT TO THE CAUSE OF THIS HEAVY BREEDING. TO FURTHER COMPOUND THIS BIZARRE SET OF EVENTS -- SOME RESIDENTS NEAR CENTRAL PARK, ARE ALSO REPORTING A HEAVY PRESENCE OF BIRDS IN THE AREA. RAVENS, CROWS, AND EVEN SOME BATS ARE HOVERING IN CERTAIN POCKETS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF AN ALFRED HITCHCOCK MOVIE. WE'RE TRYING TO GET FOOTAGE OF SOME OF THE WORST STRICKEN AREAS, SO STAY WITH US, AS THE TALK OF THE TOWN GANG BRINGS YOU FURTHER DETAILS OF THIS BREAKING STORY NEXT HOUR.







In the Ozone Somewhere.

gasp!

IN THE FUTURE IT WILL BE WRITTEN THAT IT WAS THIS FATEFUL FALL FROM THE SKY THAT SET EVERYTHING IN MOTION. THAT CAUSED EVERYTHING TO CHANGE.

IT WAS A PERFECT COMBINATION OF BLUDD'S TOXIC BODY COMPOSITION, THE SYMBIOTE'S RELEASE OF ITS OWN POWER, AND THE FACT THAT JIM DOWNING'S SOUL HAD BEEN TO HEAVEN, HELL AND 'THE BLACK.'

AND THAT COMBINATION WAS THE BRIEF OPPORTUNITY NEEDED TO PUSH OVER THE FIRST, FATEFUL DOMINO IN THIS BATTLE...

THOUGH NONE OF THE COMBATANTS WOULD EVER BE AWARE OF THAT FACT.

INSTEAD THEY WAGED
A BATTLE AGAINST EACH
OTHER THAT SHOOK
THE VERY ROOFTOPS.

A FIGHT THAT COULDN'T END IN
ANYONE'S DEATH...BECAUSE THEY
EACH NEEDED ONE ANOTHER
FOR THEIR OWN SURVIVAL.



IF ONE DIED... THEY ALL
WOULD. THAT LINK MADE
WHAT THEY WERE DOING
SEEM FOOLISH AT THE TIME.



BUT FOR THOSE WHO'VE HEARD
THE REST OF THIS LEGEND-- IT'S
WHAT HAPPENED LATER THAT
MADE THIS MOMENT HISTORICAL.





BECAUSE IT WAS WHEN THE FIRST FISSION BEGAN. WHEN A SINGLE SLIVER OF LIGHT CUT ACROSS THE DARKNESS WHERE HE'D BEEN HIDING FOR SO LONG.



AND THAT CRACK WOULD SOON TURN INTO A GAPING HOLE!



SMATT



KRACH



IT
WOULDN'T
KILL YOU! I
WAS BEGGING IT
TO, DO IT BUT
IT WOULDN'T
LISTEN!

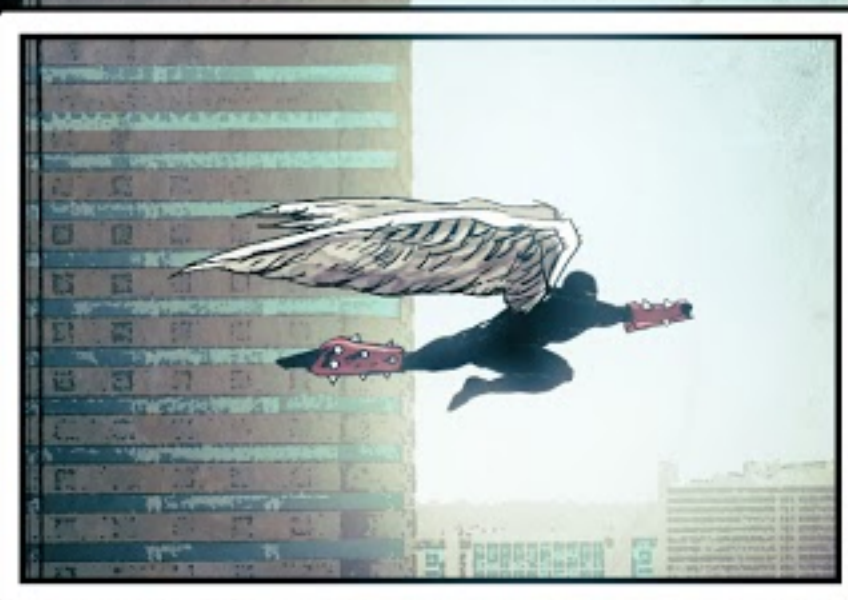


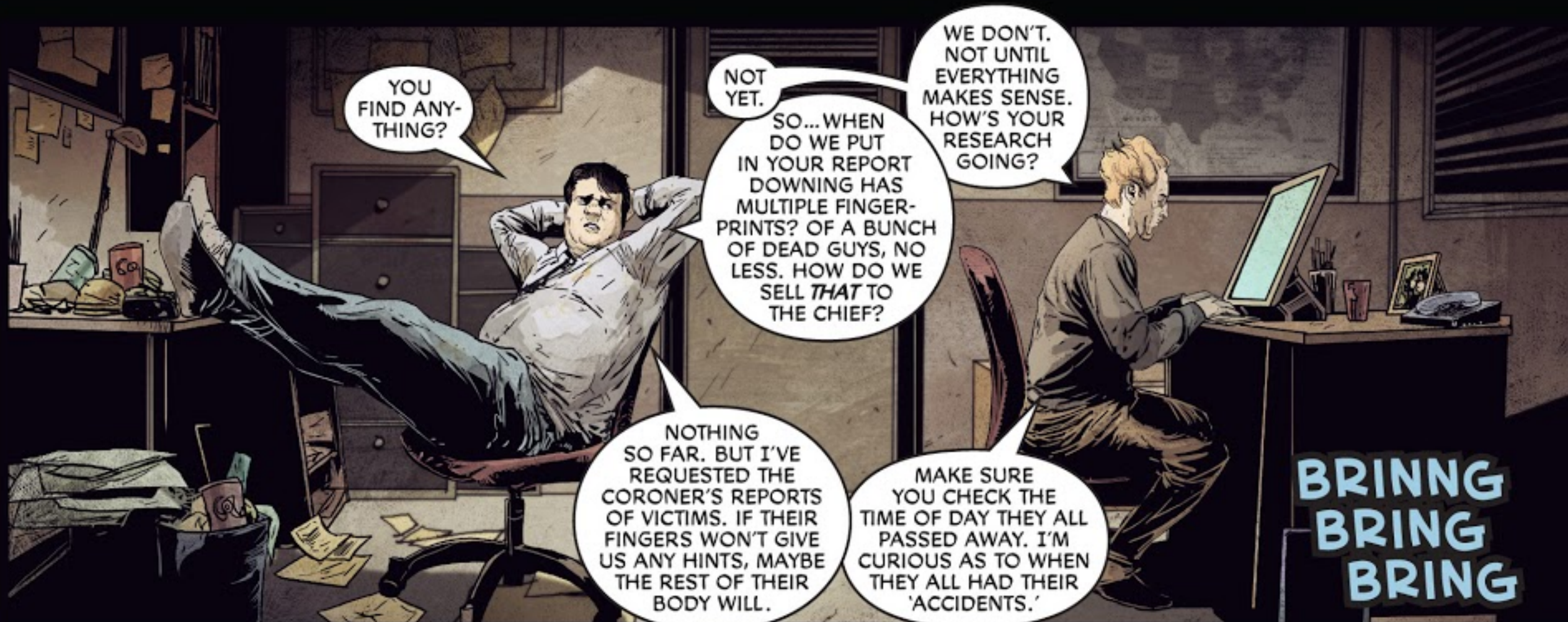
BECAUSE
IT KNEW.
IT'S DAYS WERE
NUMBERED.



HOW
COULD IT KILL
DOWNING...

WHEN HE
DOESN'T EXIST
ANYMORE?





YOU FIND ANYTHING?

NOT YET.

SO... WHEN DO WE PUT IN YOUR REPORT DOWNING HAS MULTIPLE FINGER-PRINTS? OF A BUNCH OF DEAD GUYS, NO LESS. HOW DO WE SELL *THAT* TO THE CHIEF?

WE DON'T. NOT UNTIL EVERYTHING MAKES SENSE. HOW'S YOUR RESEARCH GOING?

NOTHING SO FAR. BUT I'VE REQUESTED THE CORONER'S REPORTS OF VICTIMS. IF THEIR FINGERS WON'T GIVE US ANY HINTS, MAYBE THE REST OF THEIR BODY WILL.

MAKE SURE YOU CHECK THE TIME OF DAY THEY ALL PASSED AWAY. I'M CURIOUS AS TO WHEN THEY ALL HAD THEIR 'ACCIDENTS.'

**BRING
BRING
BRING**



YOU WANT ME TO GET THAT?



I'VE GOT IT.

HELLO? THIS IS DETECTIVE WILLIAMS.

?

WHO IS THIS?



PSST! SAM... I'M PUTTING THIS ON SPEAKER.

CLIK



WE'VE MET BEFORE DETECTIVE-- MORE THAN ONCE. I WANTED TO TELL YOU SOMETHING ISN'T QUITE RIGHT. SOMETHING ODD IS HAPPENING WITH THIS NEW SPAWN.

SPAWN? HOW DO YOU KNOW HIM?!



BECAUSE WE ALL HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN WHAT HE DOES.



COG!

IN THE FLESH, SO TO SPEAK.

HOW'D YOU...

MAKE A CALL AND GET HERE AT THE SAME TIME? SURELY, YOU'RE PAST THOSE KINDS OF SURPRISES. WE'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS A HANDFUL OF TIMES. SO, YOUR REDUNDANT QUESTIONS ARE QUITE TIRESOME.



LISTEN HERE YOU ARROGANT PIECE OF SHIT! YOU THINK YOU'RE SOMETHING SPECIAL?! OR SCARY? OR CLEVER? I DON'T! BECAUSE I KNOW YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT ANYTHING BUT YOURSELF! SO STOP WITH THE GRANDIOSE ACT... I'M NOT BUYING IT!

SAM! BACK OFF... PLEASE!

IT'S FINE, TWITCH. I CAME FOR YOU ANYWAY. NOT THIS BUFFOON.

I'M HERE TO TELL YOU YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE CLUES WRONG.



TWITCH!
TURN ON YOUR
TV-- YOU AND SAM
NEED TO SEE WHAT'S
HAPPENING OUT-
SIDE! WE'VE GOTTEN
CALLS THE PAST FEW
HOURS BUT IT SEEMS
TO BE GETTING
WORSE!

ONE
CHANNEL'S
SHOWING
AERIAL VIEWS
RIGHT
NOW.

SOME
SOURCES ARE
TELLING US THAT CERTAIN
POCKETS OF THE CITY ARE
FAR WORSE THAN OTHERS!
WE ARE TRYING TO SEE IF
WE CAN BRING VIEWERS A
CLOSER LOOK, BUT FROM
MY VANTAGE... WE DON'T
NEED TO GET MUCH
CLOSER.

YOU'RE
GOING TO
DIE!
EVERY LAST
ONE
OF YOU!

ENOUGH!

IF YOU HAD
THE POWER, YOU
WOULDN'T NEED TO TALK.
YOU'D JUST KILL ME!
BUT YOU CAN'T... OR YOU
WON'T. SO YOU DON'T GET TO
SIT THERE AND QUESTION
ANYTHING I WANT
YOU TO DO!

REPORTING LIVE

AND I HOPE
YOU KEEP POURING
OUT ALL THE EVIL INSIDE
YOU! IT'LL MAKE THINGS
THAT MUCH EASIER FOR
ME! BECAUSE YOU'RE
DONE CONTROLLING
ME!

NEXT: THE 250th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!
THE RETURN OF SIMMONS! AND THE DEATH OF JIM DOWNING??

